Delirium

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Delirium

by HyphenL

Summary

Feverish, Will is doubting his sanity more and more; Hannibal takes advantage of it to mess with his mind, out of curiosity. But Will is just a tad more resilient than Hannibal had accounted for, somehow more in control... and, really, just full of surprises.

Includes smut against a ladder (you know which one), characters from Hannibal's past, implied death of characters not major to this fic, and Hannibal discovering those feelings thingies people talk a lot about.

Notes

This fic is mostly compliant to the canon of the films (not books): Hannibal Rising, Red Dragon, Silence Of The Lambs and Hannibal.

Yule log and whipped cream

Chapter Summary

> Feverish, Will is doubting his sanity more and more; Hannibal takes advantage of it to mess with his mind, out of curiosity.
>
> Includes dubious-con sex against a ladder. Yes, that one.

“I don't remember”, Will said, while leaning on the wooden ladder behind him, watching the empty bin near Dr Lecter's desk to avoid looking at him directly. “This is getting worse. I am... I'm afraid I may be losing my mind.”

His chest rose, slowly, as he slightly bent his head backwards so it would rest on the ladder, closing his eyes for a minute second, to rest.

“I would not let that happen to you”, Hannibal answered in his usual, composed manner.

He was close by, almost at arm's length, and Will turned his head towards him, his hands still resting on the reassuring warmth of the ladder's wood.

“I'm losing track of time. I don't even recall coming here.”

“We shall overcome this issue” Hannibal said, as if it was that simple. “I believe you have a watch?”

“Yes.”

“May I see it?”

Will lifted his hand, straightening up in the process. Dr Lecter took him by the wist, carefully examining the watch with his other hand. Will heard a light 'click'; Hannibal was checking the time on his own watch to put Will's on time.

“There”, he said. “Each time you feel lost, I want you to focus on it.”

“As an anchor” Will commented.

He let down his wrist and laid back on the ladder. He felt tired. He closed his eyes.

Throat exposed, but only Hannibal noticed that. Rising chest, the curve of ribs, blood flowing in the jugular vein of his neck, smaller veins swelling on his slender hands.

He slightly leaned in, silently inhaling the scent that rose up from the man.

Sweet, salted fever.

Will opened his eyes and found him there, at almost no distance from him, his face scrutinising and calm, as usual.

Hannibal could feel the heat of Will's body rising up to him.

“I don't know what to do”, Will simply said, his blue, oddly clear eyes giving him an innocent look.

Hannibal didn't answer, but watched his face attentively with a piercing gaze.

“How is your analysis doing, Doctor Lecter?” Will asked jokingly, because Hannibal closeness was making him ill at ease. “Can you see what kind of insanity is creeping under that skin of mine?”

“I could not say which” Hannibal answered -and Will swallowed uncomfortably. “But I assure you I will make sure to discover that.”

Will averted his gaze. A part of him was still hoping his condition was mostly physiological.

Suddenly, Dr Lecter's hand seized the wood of the ladder upside Will's hand, roughly, almost brutally, which seemed strange coming from such a refined man.

Hannibal's head leaned in even closer; Will could now feel the warmth of his breath on him.

“Can you still tell the difference between delusion and reality?” he asked, staring into Will's eyes with such intensity the other man slightly cringed.

“I... am not sure” he answered. “I think I can, but I don't trust my mind anymore, I-”

“Do not worry” Hannibal interrupted. “We will find a way for it. You are my friend, Will, and I wouldn't want Mr Crawford or anyone else think less of you because of your... condition.”

Will closed his eyes, trying to repress a shudder. He had not dared to think about that yet.

He opened them back soon enough, as Hannibal had taken one of his hands in one of his, the one which was not gripping the ladder.

“Let us do a simple exercise” Dr Lecter suggested while rising slowly Will's hand to chest level. “Tell me Will, how do you know *this* is real?”

Will didn't know. He didn't. He *couldn't* be sure.

A slight burst of panic made irruption into his chest, gnawing at the side of his heart.

But it was real. It had to be. It *felt* real.

“I don't know” he answered. “The wood. The ladder. The ground under my feet. It's real. It *feels* real.”

Hannibal observed him for a long time, probably trying to determine how convinced Will was of his own words. Then he looked at the hand he had taken into his and, very slowly, rose it so it would lay against the wood of the ladder, right above Will's curled brown hair. He pinned it there, firmly, but not harshly, so Will would be able to break free any time he wanted.

But Will didn't know what he wanted.

He wanted to know what was real.

“But is that proof enough?” Hannibal asked, his chin rising up oh so lightly and his eyes shrinking a bit, like a man who admires his work. “Are mere *sensations* proof enough? Sensations seem real in a dream, Will.”

This was too strange to be real.

Dr Lecter had taken Will's other wrist, and was elevating it also, so it would rest on the other side of his head, against the wood; the solid, warm, wood.

“Real” Will said.

I had to be.

Why was Dr Lecter acting so? Was he really? He had no reason to. He would never. He was a calm, collected man, who didn't touch his patient unless circumstances needed him too.

Will noticed he was freezing.

Hannibal's face was merely inches away from his.

“Illusion” Will whispered. “This is only an illusion. I am dreaming, I have to be.”

He tried to get free of the other man's grip but Hannibal, after letting him push him away slightly to show that he *could* indeed break free, then made a point in gently, but firmly, pinning his hands back against the ladder.

“You have to decide, Will” Hannibal whispered into the other's ear. “Illusion, or reality. Only you know it.”

“I- I don't know” Graham answered -and he noticed then that his voice was slightly broken. “I don't know, it does *look* like a dream, an illusion, but-”

“But.”

“...The sensations -the feelings- they seem *real*.”

“Perception” Hannibal repeated slowly. “You rely on physical stimulation to determine wither what you are experiencing is real or not.”

“Yes.”

As if he was deep in thoughts, Dr Lecter leaned in so much this time his cheek was almost touching Will's -burning it with warmth.

It *felt* real, but this was such an improbable situation.

“Why would you be imagining this, Will?” the soft, velvet voice of Hannibal asked, blowing gently on Will's ear and neck.

Graham's body jerked on his own, appalled by the implications of this sentence -by the implication of Will *losing his mind.*

But he couldn't get free.

As soon as he had gotten out of Dr Lecter's loosened embrace, he was pushed and pressed back harshly into the ladder. Hannibal didn't look collected anymore, his fierce gaze piercing Will's brain, pinning it to the back of his head just as his arms where maintaining him roughly against the wood.

“Shhh...” Hannibal said as if Will was a beast that needed comforting. “Don't move... Don't resist, it's so gentle... like slipping into a warm bath.”

Hannibal's grip on him hurt a little, but not so much as for Will to want to struggle. He didn't know if this was actually happening, and all his mind was focused on understanding what was going on. This couldn't be happening.

One of Hannibal's arms slipped behind his back, and he embraced him like a partner in a waltz, cheek against cheek, lightly rocking him into comfort.

“This is *very real*” Hannibal said in an eery voice.

No, this is not, Will thought, petrified by fear and anxiety. *This is a dream, and I am crazy*.

He leaned into the embrace, into the false warmth which felt so true and reassuring, taking a grip on the other man's vest. He couldn't face himself.

“You are not crazy, dear friend” Hannibal whispered lightly into his hear.

They were now pressed one against another, and Will couldn't care less. He felt scared, terrified, and the most powerless he had ever felt in his entire life.

Sanity drifting away from him.

“Shhh” Hannibal repeated gently. “It's alright, don't fight it.”

Will could feel the other man move against him now, his hands caressing his back in comforting motions, holding him in that strange embrace that was neither a cradle nor a waltz. But it was soothing, so when Dr Lecter eventually reached for his mouth, Will merely complied.

It felt strange. Why would he entertain this kind of... thoughts, towards Hannibal?

His kiss wasn't gentle; rather fierce, *devouring*, in total contradiction with everything Will knew of his collected, refined psychologist.

His mind was in a strange place.

Hannibal's mouth was now on his neck, ravaging him, and his hands, equally famished, were tearing the front of his shirt apart.

He felt less like a human and more like a beast, savage, untamed, ferocious. Will was but a puppet in his claws.

It felt soothing. Under this attack, Will didn't have to think anymore, to wonder how much of this was real, how much of him was already *mad;* the assault made it all clear: nothing of it was truly happening, and he was either dreaming, hallucinating, or already completely *gone*.

He had no fear left in him.

He was half undressed when Hannibal harshly turned him so he would face the ladder rather than him, the remains of his teared up shirt hanging on his back, his pants being quickly pushed down by impatient hands; Hannibal then pressed himself entirely against his back, and Will shuddered.

He now felt scared, but excited at the same time. Something in this had brought him back from the verge of insanity -either this was real or not.

Hannibal bit him lightly on the side of the neck, pausing, with some sort of regret. He then abandoned his biting to smell Will's hair instead.

The sweetest scent on the most malleable body. His predator instincts urged him to eat him raw.

Will panted lightly, gripping the ladder with two hands. He couldn't see Hannibal now, he could only feel his body on him, his hands, and what he was doing with his fingers; that felt good; that felt like reality and madness had not consequence at all anymore.

“Don't move” Hannibal breathed unto his neck, and Will brassed himself for what he thought was to come. “Don't move.”

Legs slightly parted, Will griped the wood even harder, biting his lips to retain a gasp.

It hurt, although slightly, even if Hannibal was sliding in slow. “Shh, don't resist” his soft voice said behind him. “Remember what I told you? *Like slipping into a warm bath*.”

He had a firm grip on his hips, which he used to stay steady and consistent during the whole time it took him to settle in fully.

When he was, he paused an instant, resting his head against the brown curls.

Will felt his own body tremble and, while Hannibal's breath sounded regular and levelled, his own came out erratic and rasped.

He hanged unto the ladder so hard the articulation of his hands had turned white.

He felt like his body was on the verge on collapsing. If Hannibal just pressed a little further, a little harder, he would break Will apart.

And he did.

Will shuddered and cried and grabbed everything that presented itself to his distressed hands, while the other man inflicted upon him an odd pain and such pleasure he had never felt before, his fingers pushed into his hipbone, his mouth mostly breathing or nibbling on his neck, licking the occasional tear he managed to push out of him.

When he finally came undone, Will blacked out in blissful darkness.

When he came to his senses, he was alone in Hannibal's office. The light was on, but there was not a noise. Not even a sign Hannibal had been there.

Will was fully clothed, but his shirt was teared up, and he could feel a certain wetness in the front of his pants.

He took a look at his watch and,

it was only two minutes past the time of his meeting with Hannibal.

A noise in the next room startled him; it was the toilet flushing. Moments later, Dr Lecter entered the room, drying his hands with a paper handkerchief.

“I apologise for my lateness” the man said in his usual, calm, collected way. “A mishap with the hand towel.”

He stopped when he saw Will's clothing, through which one could probably notice Will's beating, panicked heart.

“Dare I ask what happened to your shirt?” Dr Lecter pondered. “Did Mr Crawford test your limits yet again?”

Will couldn't utter a word. He was frozen in horror.

“What is it, Will?” Hannibal asked in a slightly concerned tone. “You don't seem quite like yourself, tonight.”

“I don't know”, Will croaked with a dry voice. “I think I might have had a... a woken hallucination. I- I- I think I'm losing my mind!”

“Of course not” Dr Lecter said calmly, throwing his used up handkerchief on top of the others in the bin. “I would not let that happen to you.”

Silvery White Buds Tea

Chapter Summary

Already shaken by a previous, manipulative encounter with Dr Lecter, Will Graham finds himself sleepwalking into his house. His fever is worsening, and Hannibal nows it is time to prepare Will for the final phase of his scheme...

-Mentions of Lady Murasaki (from Hannibal Rising), Hannibal's aunt, mentor and sort of lover.

“Will.” Dr Lecter said when he noticed the man standing on his doorstep in the middle of the night. “Although it is always a pleasure for me to receive you, may I enquire what brings you at such a tardy hour?”

The brunette didn't answer, his eyes lost in a haze, the golden light of street lamps dancing on his features like a touch of honey.

“Will?”

The man looked at him, a distant air on his face, as if he was dreaming.

Sleepwalking actually.

“Come in” Hannibal said while making way for him to enter through the door.

After Will had done so, Hannibal inconspicuously checked the street for any pedestrian; luckily for him, there was no-one at sight.

Luckily for him, and for the passerby.

*

Once inside and the door carefully closed, Hannibal gestured for Will to follow and had him sit in a comfortable chair.

“So”, he started. “What brings you to my home in the middle of the night?”

The other man had this eery look on him that made him seem both vulnerable and at a loss. His face lightly twitching with the usual anxiety, he looked around him without, apparently, recognising the place.

“I'm afraid I'm losing my mind” he said.

Hannibal couldn't repress a smile, which he immediately hid under a mask of false pretence.

He went to sit on the arm of Will's wide chair and put a hand on his back, gently patting him in a soothing manner.

“Do not worry, my friend. I would never let that happen to you.”

Will's head twitched for a moment and then, much to Hannibal's surprise, the man leaned against his flank, resting his head on the Doctor' shoulder and closing his eyes.

His soothing hand stopped moving, uncertain.

Will had never looked more exhausted and vulnerable. He had had trouble sleeping, these days, and the hallucinations and memory loss were getting worse.

Last time he had panicked, he had come to Hannibal's office holding his hands up as if they had been covered in blood.

Now he rested tiredly against Hannibal's shoulder, brown curls interwoven together on the sleeve of his elegant dressing gown.

Lecter hesitated a second, then drew his fingers through the soft, brown mane of the sleepy man. Will shifted peacefully, adjusting his head against his arm, and Hannibal felt a weird something moving in his guts, like a trapped spider wary in the dark.

He thought about Lady Murasaki.

Strength and control, a collected yet vulnerable look from which blossomed a remarkable mind, a pragmatic sense of ethics, smartness intertwined with kindness, determination.

Will.

His eyelashes where closed, yet trembling nervously. He rested against him, but didn't actually repose. The tip of Hannibal's fingers, still gently fondling his hair, noticed the unusual heat that radiated from his scalp and forehead.

Fever. Harsh fever. The encephalitis was burning him up.

“Will” he gently called.

The feverish man groaned lightly, and tried to straighten himself up.

“Shhh...” Hannibal tranquillised him, remembering the words he had used last time. “Don't move. Let me put you to bed, you need to rest..”

Will stood up obediently, a bit unsteady on his legs.

“I don't feel well.” he stated.

“I can see that” Hannibal answered. “I will have you sleep in the spare room, if you will.”

The other man nodded confusedly, and followed him to Hannibal's own bedroom.

“Make yourself comfortable” Lecter told him. “Have you eaten? I could bring you an infusion, to help you rest.”

Will rose a blank look to him, lost and vulnerable and... desirable, in a way.

Hannibal observed him a moment and pondered.

This could be the night. Will's illness had reached a pick, and his brain was burning up. If nobody picked on this, he would probably die by himself quite soon.

But Will's death belonged only to Hannibal.

So, tonight was the night, and he wanted it to be special.

Hannibal went to his cupboard and carefully chose a most refined dressing gown, that he brought to the bed and handed to Will.

“Here, please put that on, and get under the sheets. Unless you want to take a shower first?”

Will nodded absently, taking the clothes that were given to him without seeming to really understand what was going on. Was he still sleepwalking? Had his fever taken over? Actual hallucinations maybe?

It didn't matter now.

*

Hannibal went to the kitchen to prepare a light, tasteful snack for Will, as well as a cup of his finest white tea.

While the teapot sang, his sharp knife shone as he sliced thin strips of fresh asparagus, sweet pepper and a right of red onion as an accompaniment for the main dish. When the blade then slid effortlessly through the raw piece of tenderloin he had kept for such an occasion, he felt a shiver run down his spine. This one, contrarily to the others, had been of prime quality. A pure soul in a world of monsters. A delicacy.

He went back to his room, carrying on a silver tray the light course of salad, carpaccio and tea; Will seemed sound asleep.

He had taken off his clothes, that laid messily on the floor and the bed, and hadn't put on the elegant dressing gown, which annoyed Hannibal slightly.

The sleeping man laid now on his back under the cover, probably half naked, his arms above brown curls, his features still looking weary and tormented nonetheless.

Hannibal arranged his tray on the beside table, cleaned up the mess of discarded clothes, and brought an armchair near the bed to sit besides Will, whom he then woke up by lightly shaking him by the shoulder.

The young man mumbled and shifted a bit until eventually opening his eyes.

“I brought you refreshment” Hannibal said, gesturing towards the tray. “Would you care for a bite?”

Will blinked, awaking slowly, looking both exhausted and confused.

“Where am I?” he asked, straightening up with difficulty. “Is that... Is that your room?”

“Indeed” Hannibal answered, handing him the warm cup. “And this is my finest tea; made from silvery white buds; light, delicate, just the right amount of sweetness. Please, do taste it. I assure you it is worth a try.”

Eerily confused, Will mechanically accepted the beverage.

“Why am I here?” he asked. “How comes I... is that your bed?”

“It is” Hannibal answered quietly. “You showed up at my doorstep in quite a state Will, you worried me.”

The other man avoided his eyes, his face twitching lightly in his usual manner, blinking.

“Sleepwalking again?” he asked in a strangled voice.

“That, and slightly more. Please, drink your tea while it retains the proper warmth.”

Will's shoulders twitched lightly, but he nonetheless brought the hot beverage to his lips, tasting the delicate liquid inside, which hold a touch of something other than tea he couldn't quite define.

“It's good” he commented, trying his best to avoid Hannibal's piercing, unsettling gaze. “What did you mean, 'and slightly more'?”.

“You should sustain yourself first”, Hannibal answered. “I made something for you. Not too elaborate, just a midnight snack; I felt like you needed it. Are you properly feeding yourself?”

“I...”

Will realised he didn't remember. He felt strange. As he had been thirsty, he had absentmindedly finished his cup of tea, that Hannibal had then taken off his hands.

“I feel dizzy” Will said.

“It is fine” Hannibal commented gently. “It's the tea. In a moment, you'll begin to feel light-headed, then drowsy. It is a potent brew. It will help you sleep. You need it, after all that happened.”

“All that... what?” Will murmured.

He felt, not sleepy, but in a haze, and the room had started spinning around him.

“Hallucination”, he said. “Hannibal, I might be having another one.”

Hannibal gently rose his right hand to move aside one of the brown curls from Will's eyes.

“It wouldn't surprise me, Will. Your mind is probably having trouble to cope with what you did. You should eat, now. You need your strength.”

The world gyrated around Will, and his sight seemed caught in a blurred mist.

“What has... happened, now, what is happening?” he asked in a panicking voice. “I can't... I can't see straight. What is going on Hann- what did I do?”

Hannibal gently took Will's hands into his.

“Remarkable boy” he said. “I am afraid you did something terrible. But you shouldn't worry about it now; now you should eat, and take a rest.”

“What did I do?” Will exclaimed, seizing Hannibal by the wrist. “Did I...”

Hannibal looked at him in the eyes, lengthily.

“Yes” he said eventually, and Will fall back into the cushions, devastated.

Lecter soothingly caressed his covered leg.

“I washed the blood off your hands” he added. “I took your clothes away -better burn them. As for... the body, rest assured it will never be found.”

Will shrieked, a light whine escaping from his lips, and folded away on himself a little.

“Who was it?” he asked in a trembling voice. “How did I?...”

“I'm afraid you grew a little too implicated in your last case” Hannibal said. “It is not your fault, Will. Jack pushed you too far, beyond your limits. But all shall be fine, now. Trust in me.”

He gently rested a hand on Will's knee, above the bedcovers.

“Don't resist, don't fight it. What has passed lies in the past. Besides, it is probably better for her.”

“For whom?” Will shrieked. “Who did I kill, Hannibal? Was it?...”

The thought of a murdered Alana crossed his troubled mind.

“Shh, you need rest. I shouldn't tell you now” Dr Lecter said, taking the small, refined dish he had composed for Will. He arranged a minute portion of a thin slice of raw meat on the fork and dipped it lightly in a touch of salt. “Here, have a taste of it” he added, lifting delicately the silver utensil to Will's mouth, an hand cautiously cupped under it.

“I cannot- I can't possibly eat anything *now!*” Will shouted in anxiety. “I cannot eat anything if I- I... I just *murdered* somebody.”

A sob finally left his throat.

“Who was it? Who did I kill?” he asked the other man, almost pleading.

He thought of the blood. His last case...

Hannibal had lowered his fork and contemplated him with the usual tranquillity.

“Abigail” he said.

Then he took advantage of Will's stupor to delicately insert the fork between his parted lips.

Will was too taken aback to react, eyes lost in the wide; but eventually instinct took over and his tongue absentmindedly brought the slice of meat against his palate.

I was fresh, salted, so thin it almost melted in the mouth, watering it in the process.

Hannibal was looking at him with no small amount of satisfaction.

“Good” he said. “You clearly needed sustenance. Now, clear your mind, and get a rest. You're in shock now. Do not worry about it. I regret it came to this, Will, but every game must have its ending. Abigail was very dear to me, as much as she was to you, but you know as well as I she was a very troubled young person. She was... a pure soul in a world of monsters” he added, feeding Will another portion of the thinly sliced meat.

“There, dear friend. Don't waste it. This meal really is of prime quality.”

Château Margaux 1995

Chapter Summary

Will Graham's fever is reaching a pick, and Hannibal believes it would be time for him to take that life he thinks as his. However, Graham has always been a slightly bit less predictable than Hannibal accounted for.

-Divergence from canon.
-Mentions of Lady Murasaki (from Hannibal Rising), Hannibal's aunt, mentor and sort of lover.
-Mentions of Mischa (from Hannibal Rising), Hannibal's little sister, who disappears tragically, leaving him scarred for life.

When Hannibal came back from the kitchen, Will was crying.

Curled up on himself, sobbing violently, visibly greatly distressed.

Hannibal settled on the beside table two elegant crystal glasses he had brought back with him, along with a fleshly opened bottle of an exquisite dark wine he was personally very fond

of.

He looked at the weeping man, folded on himself, wrapped up messily into the bedsheets, while he was gracefully pouring the wine.

This night called for celebration.

He sat back in his chair, watching Will silently, attentively until the sobs lessened and the man eventually found the strength to raise his eyes towards him.

He then handed him a glass of wine.

“Here” he said. “Have some of this. It is from a truly exquisite vintage, it should help you dull the pain.”

Will managed to look at him, blinking, twitching, in disbelief.

“How could I be drinking now, after what... after what I-” His voice broke down.

“I murdered Abigail” he whispered, positively ravaged.

The room was still spinning.

The world was but a hell of confused blurs and hazed reflexions.

The black wine in the glass Hannibal was still holding for him looked like blood mixed with the darkest shade of night.

Hannibal, holding that cup, looked like a collected demon awaiting for a signature in blood.

Will was loosing his mind.

“I'm scared”, he blurted.

“You shouldn't be” Hannibal answered. “I will care for you, my friend; nobody will know what you did.”

Will was shaking his head, and each shake made the place more blurry.

“No, no, no!” he uttered. “I have to go to the police. Tell them what I did- tell them to lock me away-”

“It wouldn't be the police” Hannibal coldly pointed out. “Do you wish to be locked away from your own mind, Will?”

“Yes!” the other man exclaimed, utterly broken. “Yes!...”

He took his face in his hands and started trembling. “Hannibal, I killed-”

“I did that too” Hannibal interrupted. “When I was a surgeon.”

“It's not the same!”

“Of course it is. Suffering a loss directly caused by one's line of work, a consequence of overzealous good will.”

“But it was murder!”

“It always is” Hannibal stated calmly while leaning over Will.

He put the glass of dark wine in his hand and encouraged him to taste it through a gesture of his chin.

“And it will never leave you, that crime” he added tranquilly. “You wake up each day remembering exactly what you have done. But you learn to live with it.”

“How can I learn-”

“Drink.”

Will was clearly too shaken up to ingest the wine himself, so Hannibal lightly pushed the glass so it would press against his lips.

“I don't want to drink” Will said, and he put the beverage back on the beside table.

For once, he looked at Hannibal directly, with two trembling eyes.

He couldn't really focus, he felt drunk already, or drugged; he thought about the tea.

Hannibal was looking at him, quiet, collected, almost content in a way, and suddenly, like a ray of light finally pierces a mantel of clouds, Will saw right through him.

“I know who you are”, he rasped. “I can feel it; I see through your eyes now.”

Hannibal froze, his satisfied look switching from mild comfort to sharp annoyance; his hand sliding nonchalantly towards a pen that laid on the beside table.

“I know what you want” Will completed, whispering, leaning in drunkly towards him, his eyelids made heavy by the mists of drugs and tiredness.

His lips joined Hannibal's lightly, clumsily, with surprising gentleness. Hannibal could still taste the salt of meat in the warmth of Will's mouth.

His hand got away from the pen, hesitating, until his other hand sank fingers into Will's curled brown mane.

He made that kiss fierce. It was taking what he had made irrevocably his.

He thought about Lady Murasaki.

He thought about Mischa.

Will's lips were salted by Abigail's flesh and by tears.

Will was far gone, the mushrooms had finally taken him; swept his inhibitions away.

“You want me close” Will whispered in a husky voice. “You want me close.”

He wanted him.

Will's short beard lightly scrapped his face, like the one condiment that spices up a seasoning.

Will's feverish hands had dug into his shoulders, desperate, clinging as if for dear life.

“You want me close” he repeated, and he was now crying. “Hannibal, I killed-”

He interrupted himself and kissed him back with a passion.

Hannibal felt troubled.

An agitation had taken over his immutable composure, that giant spider in his chest, irritated by something, by Will, by the situation.

Do I want him close? he thought.

He remembered Mischa. So near, yet unreachable. Part of him, yet gone for ever.

Lady Murasaki, who had taught him all, who had loved him, understood him, protected him even- and left.

Unreachable.

Do I want him close?

He harshly threw Will back on the bed, maintaining his shoulders against the mattress, looking at him, scrutinising him, searching in those lost eyes an answers to his pondering.

“Hannibal” Will said.

He heard it in Lady Murasaki's voice.

He heard it in his little sister's voice, too.

He heard it, like a faint echo, in his mother's, in his father's long gone words.

He saw a lake, and a mansion, a green prairie. He saw Mischa playing in her bath, foam and bubbles on her little plump arm.

He saw the day.

“Hannibal” Will muttered again, lost in a mist, and Hannibal leaned down, slightly dishevelled, to eat another kiss from his hungry lips.

He bit him; he could feel the fever, the heat rising up in Will's burning forehead, the fire in his tired body; he saw him naked, for the first time, and his flesh tasted sweet.

Will was tender, delicate, exquisite; each of his every gesture surprised and ravished the other, his gentle nibbling, his caressing moans.

His kisses like velvet, the delicate curve of his back arched in delight on the sheets.

His cries.

Hannibal wanted to eat him up, devour him fully, taste him, learn him, melt in him like some sort of twisted...

His forehead against Will's, he could feel the flames of the fever rising; and death slowly crawling down from his brain into his whole body.

Ragged burning breaths blended together just as, below, he was buried in full in another heat. An oven.

Will's kisses tasted like rabid joy.

*

“He can't die” Hannibal told the nurse in the corridor of the hospital, outside the quiet whiteness of Will's new chamber.

“He is very ill” the nurse answered. “Encephalitis isn't a light decease. We can't promise anything of yet.”

“No” Hannibal commanded, a dark, disquieting look piercing her like a blade. “He *can't* die; make sure of it.”

Sirloin steak, garlic mousse and a spray of green chives

Chapter Summary

> Will finally broke down, ending up at the hospital. Now Hannibal should only have to pick the pieces up- but he might just have actually tripped over his own scheme.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Hannibal reached the corridor in which Will's hospital room was situated, he was disquieted by a dull rumour coming from behind its door.

He knocked before entering, obviously, but his good manners hid an ire the presence of numerous policemen and Jack only contributed to intensify.

“Mr Crawford” he saluted coldly when he noticed the other man. “I thought this was a patient's room. Or have you decided to move the police headquarters here?”

Jack welcomed what he thought a banter with a brief smile.

“I'm glad to see you here, Dr Lecter” he said. His smile then dropped, as well as his voice, now down to a whisper. “I was actually going to send for you.”

Jack's eyes went to Will, who laid in bed tiredly, his head turned towards them, looking better but still exhausted, and accepting.

Accepting of what?

The tarantula in Hannibal's chest huddled up irritatedly.

Too many people crowding Will; Hannibal's mind started labelling faces and offals.

Will looked at him with resigned serenity; he didn't like that.

Jack Crawford put a hand on Lecter's shoulder to turn him away from the recovering man.

“He says he killed Abigail” Crawford whispered.

Hannibal's eyes closed briefly at those words.

“Does he?” he commented. “On what account?”

“He said that when he came to your house, his hands were covered in blood. That he told you he had murdered her.”

“I do not recall such a thing” Dr Lecter denied. “What I *do* recall, is finding him on my doorstep in the middle of the night, hallucinating and visibly burning up with fever. Is that why he wanted to turn himself in to the police?”

Jack nodded absentmindedly.

“But you know Abigail *has* disappear” he stated. “And that she was last seen on the eve of the day Will came to you.”

“I have heard of it” Hannibal admitted. He looked at Jack straight in the eyes. “Have you found any evidence incriminating Will?”

At that, Jack sighed and straightened up, letting go of Hannibal's shoulder.

“None at all” he answered. “We however found proof Abigail was involved in Nicholas Boyle's murder. Her handkerchief. It was pined to her desk with an hunting knife, covered in dry blood. We suspect either escape or suicide, as of yet.”

“Like a note”, Hannibal commented.

His eyes went to Will, who was still looking at him, tired, expressionless.

As if waiting for him.

“And your crew is now taking the deposition of a man who, less than a week ago, was very much dying from encephalitis” Dr Lecter commented, in his usual courteous yet judging way of saying “you're an idiot”. “As you may know, brain inflammation involves, in the most severe instances, significant cases of hallucinations. I am afraid Will's report might very much be inadmissible, especially as I, a main witness, can assure you there was no evidence whatsoever of criminal activity on his part when he showed up on my doorstep.”

Jack studied him attentively.

“And you would swear on that?” he asked. “I know you have a fondness for Will, Dr Lecter, even as a patient.”

“Fondness would not go so far on my part as to cover up for murder, Agent Crawford” Hannibal answered with a slight frown of his brown.

Jack watched him for a moment, then nodded in agreement.

He could not fantom a man such as Dr Lecter crossing the line of professionalism.

“If I may” Dr Lecter added in a tone clearly indicating he was going to take their conversation in another direction, “I would now ask of you, as well as of your *suite*, to leave my patient to rest. He is still recovering from a much violent affliction and, unless you find any evidence corroborating his feverish declarations, there is no true reason for the police to get involved in his recovery.”

Jack looked slightly offended by his demanding tone but, as Hannibal had until now always shown him genuine deference and respect, decided to let it slide. He called back his team to send it on its way, and went to Will to wish him a prompt recovery.

“Don't think too much of what you told me” he added. “All evidence points out to Abigail running away from a murder she committed. You probably have nothing to feel guilty about.”

Will smiled coyly, not looking very reassured, but sent his regards to Jack and his wife nonetheless.

Then the door closed behind Crawford, and he was left alone with Hannibal in whiteness.

*

“I brought you diner” Hannibal said, arranging the content of the neat bag he was carrying with him on the bedside table. “I heard hospital's food is traditionally ghastly; I couldn't possibly let you recover strength from that only.”

“Why are you doing this?” Will asked bluntly, his head turned to him in a tired, yet determined way.

Hannibal interrupted himself an instant, then resumed his preparations.

“I do not now what you mean” he said, opening a small container of pottage.

“I killed her” Will said. “And you lie about it.”

“Shouldn't I?” Hannibal said. “I helped you cover up the murder, Will. I am, in the eyes of the law, an accomplice to your crime. Talking wouldn't do much good to me.”

He sent him a brief, meaningful look.

“You didn't tell them anything about my involvement either”, he pointed out.

“You have nothing to do with it” Will said, shaking his head repeatedly. “You have nothing to feel... guilty about, except, perhaps, this curious tendency of yours to cover up and lie about everyone else's murders.”

“I care for you, Will” Hannibal answered simply, finalising his arrangement of the elaborated course he had readied for him.

He then walked to the sole hospital chair of the room and brought it back with him to sit next to Will at the top of the bed.

Will couldn't help laughing nervously.

“What is it?” Hannibal smiled, his calm eyes focused on the other man's face, which Will was covering with his hand.

“Nothing, just... that night, when you found me, isn't exactly what you did? Take a chair and feed me like a child?”

“Indeed” Hannibal answered, collected yet smiling, with almost a hint of tenderness in his eyes. “As it is what I intend to do today.”

“I can very well use a fork by myself now, thank you”, Will said, still almost laughing, looking somewhat relieved. “Ah, this last days have been dreadful!”

Dr Lecter smiled and handed Will the silver dish of pottage, which he had managed to keep warm somehow, and that Will sampled with pleasure.

He ate in silence for a while, his usual nervousness gradually returning to darken his briefly lighted up features.

“What else happened that night?” he asked, not daring to look at him.

“What do you recall?”

Will sent him a brief, distressed look, looking wary of his own thoughts.

“I don't know. Clearly I was... hallucinating.”

“The same visions as always?” Hannibal wondered tranquilly.

Will couldn't swallow his last spoonful very well. He slid a wary glance towards his therapist.

“Not... one I have ever told you about” he muttered.

“Is that so? Why not?” Lecter asked in his usual, collected manner.

Will twitched nervously.

“It is... It would...”

He looked at the emptied dish he was still holding.

“It might be transfer” he eventually said. “I might be... I don't know, it doesn't make any sense.”

Hannibal gently took the recipient from Will's hands and replaced it with a bowl of grilled meat, aesthetically seasoned with fresh green chive and garlic mousse.

“Please, do eat” he insisted. “Now, what are you telling me, Will? Are you having... thoughts that you think might hinder your therapy?”

Will sent him a guilty look then backed away immediately, eyelids blinking wildly.

“Transfer is pretty common” Hannibal reassured him. “You wouldn't be the first of my patients to experience it.”

“It's not... It's not *transfer*” Will said, looking guilty. “Or at least, I don't think so.”

“What is it, then?” Hannibal asked tranquilly. “Can you tell me about these hallucinations of yours?”

Will hesitated, his head trembling slightly, then took a mouthful of grilled meat to avoid answering the question.

But he couldn't help voicing out how delicious it tasted.

“My butcher is very selective of his meat” Hannibal answered, looking pleased. “I am glad you appreciate it.”

Will let the exquisite piece of meat melt on his tongue, forgetting for a moment all preoccupations.

When he opened his eyes back, his look immediately fall into Hannibal's, calmly observing him.

“That night” Hannibal said, “you kissed me. Either thinking I was someone else, or knowing who I was exactly; is this the kind of thing you hesitate to ask me about? I am still your therapist, Will; you know you can trust me.”

Will's mouth had gaped slightly opened at that, giving him a vulnerable, confused look. A look Hannibal had started to appreciate on him.

“I- I- I...”

He looked at his plate, at the door, and the window, clearly discomforted by the situation.

Hannibal gently took one of his hands in his.

“You don't have to feel embarrassed, dear friend. Although you were my sole patient to overstep that boundary, it didn't upset me as much as you seem to think it did. I must admit

though, that it startled me."

Will now clearly looked ashamed of himself, but Hannibal gently patting his hand helped getting him to talk.

"Those... hallucinations" Will said. "I... we... it felt very real" he blurted. "And... really... didn't stop at kissing."

He glanced coyly at Hannibal then avoided his looking back.

"And still, you don't think of it as mere transfer" his therapist commented placidly. "Why is that? What makes it... different than the usual redirection of affect?"

Will got his hand out of Hannibal's own.

"I don't know, it just is" he said -lied- with embarrassment.

Hannibal sighed slightly and sat back in his uncomfortable chair.

"I cannot help if you are not honest with me, Will."

The man seemed at fight with himself. His fingers creased nervously the border of the sheets.

"It's..."

He lowered his head bashfully.

"It felt *safe*" he answered. "Soothing. It took me away from all the craziness in me."

Hannibal seemed interested; he leaned back towards his patient, who did not dare to look at him.

"It's... it's mad, is it?" Will half stuttered, his twitching face almost smiling in excuse. "Pathetic. And for a moment I thought-"

He was probably expecting Hannibal to interrupt, but Dr Lecter was merely observing him, expressionless.

"I though I'd *empathised* with you and- and, well, that you wanted me... *close*."

Burning with shame, he wiped his forehand with a trembling hand.

"That probably means I shouldn't stay as your patient" he added with a nervous smile, avoiding Lecter's eyes, as always.

"Probably, yes" Hannibal answered cooly. "But I wouldn't point... *affect* out as the main reason as to why."

He lightly covered one of Will's hands with his own, to appease him, maybe.

“I clearly failed to properly diagnose your encephalitis” he said. “Even though Dr Sutcliffe lied to me, I should have trusted my own instinct and overstepped his affirmations, asking for other tests to be ran. I have failed you as a therapist, and shall accept full responsibility for that.”

Will managed to look at him in the eyes for an instant.

“You couldn't have guessed Dr Sutcliffe was lying” he said. “He wasn't your patient.”

“But you were, and I put his medical advice before your own words. As a result, you almost died, and I shall never forgive myself for that.”

Will swallowed nervously, then nodded in understanding. “I will have to look for another therapist, then, I guess.”

Hannibal smiled lightly.

“Officially, I can still assist you as such” he declared. “Imagine the embarrassment us parting would cause to Jack, and his reputation, if our mishaps were to be known.”

Will bit his lips.

“You mean in the news” he said.

“Yes. I think it would be best for all that we keep up appearances, at least until the situation tones down.”

Will lower lips started trembling.

“And... as for my... state of mind... towards you? Do you think it is something we can 'tone down', too?”

Hannibal took some time pondering.

“It got me thinking” he eventually said. “Admittedly, I had never thought about it this way, but I came to realise that you and I have clearly developed more than a simple patient to therapist kind of relationship. As I previously said, I do care for you, my friend.”

Will started nodding, then shook his head.

“This- this is insane. I- I don't even know for a fact those hallucinations truly relate to you or- or if you were in them a mere embodiment of- of... *something*, I don't know!”

Hannibal gently took the barely touched dish of meat from Will's lap and put it carefully back on the bedside table.

“There might be a way, quite unorthodox I'm afraid, of figuring it out” he stated.

Will gave him an apprehensive look.

“Do you trust me?” Hannibal asked gravely, looking at him straight in the eyes with the most serious expression.

Will nervously swallowed, then slowly nodded his head.

“Good” Dr Lecter said, gently taking Will's chin between two fingers to steady him.

The younger man's face was burning up in shame.

During a fearful second, he thought about slipping away, positively terrified; the moment after, Hannibal's mouth was on his own, greedy, not too tender, strictly as carnivorous and predatory as his sick brain had imagined it to be during his hallucinations.

Lecter didn't spare him fierceness on account of his recovering; he didn't soften as others would have for a sick man and bit, licked, devoured, passionate and possessive, warily dangerous yet stimulating.

Just like in the dreams.

Will could feel his leg tremble and melt under him even though he was only sitting, and his heart was beating harshly, like a beast trying to break out of the cage of his ribs.

He found his fingers intertwined in Lecter's hair and wondered how they had arrived there.

Then, eventually, Dr Lecter pulled away, quite dishevelled, an eery, disquieting dark look lingering in his eyes, which were fixated on Will like two harpoons in a beast.

But he immediately started to straighten himself up, arranging his messed out outfit and hair, looking as effective and collected as ever.

“Now” he said in a -very slightly- winded voice. “Would you say your affect goes to an idea your brain chose to embody through my person, or mainly to the man?”

Breath ragged, Will wondered for a second.

Then he seized Lecter by the collar and brought him back to their kissing.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact: the nbc episode with Will in the hospital hadn't aired when I wrote this... so I'm kinda proud to have guessed Hannibal would bring Willy soup in that event! (even though that wasn't that difficult to figure ^^;)

Sauté de Boeuf

Chapter Summary

> Will is back from the hospital, having successfully recovered from encephalitis; however The Ripper strikes again, this time addressing a message specifically to him...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“What do you see?” Jack asked sternly, contemplating their newest crime scene with a concerned look on his face.

Will swallowed uncomfortably.

The murdered policeman laid on his back on the hospital bed, the same one Will had used during his recovery. He seemed... peaceful. His arms carefully folded on his emptied ribcage -most organs where missing.

“Is he mocking us?” Jack asked, irritated. “Killing my chief officer, on the same room you had been put in? Taunting us? What- what next? Going to the police station in the start middle of the night, make himself a sandwich?”

Will's head was shaking. Something was off.

“No” he muttered, “no...”

He looked at the cold body, who rested neatly on the bed, undisturbed.

“This... this isn't like the other murders, it's...”

The man hadn't been savagely slaughtered, and the dramatisation of the scene seemed somehow... restful. As if the man had been put to sleep rather than assassinated.

“It's a sign of gratitude” Will exposed. “An offering. A sort of... sacrifice, if you will.”

“He *sacrificed* Billy?” Jack thundered. “Why for? To thank what- insane, crazy god of his?”

Will rummaged through his hair.

“It's also a warning” he realised. “A threat.”

“A threat? That, I can believe” Crawford blurted. “Against whom? Me? You? The whole FBI?”

Will pondered.

The empty room. The body carefully laid on the white sheets, all without a splatter. The organs already removed, but the emptied ribcage neatly closed back, hands crossed on it in a parody of recumbent statue. Peaceful.

Yet, it was Jack's chief of officer, the one who had been in charge of Will's interrogation; and it was in Will's former hospital bed and chambers he had been displayed.

Gratefulness, and a warning.

“He is... *glad* I am alive” Will whispered. “He wanted me to live.”

“Why for?” Jack asked impatiently. “Aren't you trying to catch him?”

“He enjoys it” Will answered. “The game. The playing. He likes the attention.”

“Why the threat then?” Jack pointed out. “Why both celebrate your recovery and threaten you right after?”

“Not me” Will said. “You.”

Jack looked dumbfounded.

“Me?” he repeated.

“And the whole FBI, I think. He's threatening you, directly. Warning you to... not to get too close to... me.”

Will's head twitched, and he bit his lips. Jack approached him slowly, then put a hand on his shoulder.

“Why you?” he asked. “Why you precisely?”

Will went away from him, towards the window, and looked through it into the park.

He didn't answer right away.

“I'm an empath” he eventually said. “Most probably his perfect opposite. He might... he might find himself in me.”

“Twisted psychopath!” Crawford spat with a gesture of half contained fury. “Does that mean you're in immediate danger?”

The left corner of Will's lips twitched in a mock-up smile.

“That means I have his... *interest*.”

“Well that can't be good news.”

Something was off.

“I suppose not” Will muttered.

The clean room, impeccable. Not a drop of blood.

The bedside table, neat, almost too tidy.

The whole room was too neat.

“Have you checked everywhere?” Will asked Agent Crawford.

“Of course we have. Why? What are you looking for?”

“I don't know. Have you found anything? Anything out of the ordinary?”

He looked around the room, opening drawers, checking under the tables; he pulled a white curtain and found himself facing a flower.

“What is that?” he asked.

Jack rose his shoulders, arms crossed.

“You tell me” he said. “It's not uncommon for patients to be brought flowers at the hospital.”

“Red carnation” Will whispered.

The vase was magnificent.

“Is it not uncommon for them to be offered in such a fine, crystal vase?” he asked, showing Jack the recipient. “This couldn't possibly come from the hospital.”

“Are you saying our Ripper left it behind?” Crawford cringed. “Why for? To *honour* the death of Billy, perhaps?”

“No” Will uttered. “I think...”

Blood red flower in a crystal vase.

A declaration, addressed to him, specifically.

“This is courtship, Jack. The Ripper left me a token of admiration. He killed this man for me.”

Jack shook his head.

“I don't know what you are saying, but I'm not sure I like it.”

Will let his eyes wander through the closed window.

“I am chosen” he said in a strangled voice. “For what purpose, I don't know yet, but he chose me. He offered his killing to me, and he warns you to stay away.”

“What, like some sort of possessive, deranged psycho-cat?” Jack said. “One who brings you the mouse he just killed and looks at you then with a Cheshire grin?”

“Yes” Will muttered. “I think so.”

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“What hold you?” Hannibal asked when Will eventually came home. “I hope Jack isn't already pushing you to solve another murder.”

“As a matter of fact, he isn't” Will answered, getting his jacket off and hanging it on the coat-peg. “This is personal.”

“Really” Lecter commented, leaving the kitchen to come and great him, still wearing an extremely fitting cooking apron and drying his hands on a dishcloth. “What is it about, tell me.”

“The Ripper struck again” Will said when they came face to face. “One of Jack's officers, left in my old bedroom at the hospital.”

Hannibal looked at him attentively.

“Do you think he is coming after you?” he asked.

“No” Will answered. “It's... eery. I think he kind of likes me, actually. Not that it is a good thing.”

He failed to notice the little drop of smile in Hannibal's face at those words; but again, Will didn't look at his face most of the time.

“You are not in danger then” Hannibal concluded. “This pleases me. Are you occupied now? You could join me in the kitchen.”

Will nodded absentmindedly, and rummaged through his brown curls.

“Of course, yes. What are you cooking?”

“Oh, but a feast, really” Lecter answered with a smile. “We have yet to properly celebrate your complete recovery; I wanted to make something special.”

“You know I'm not very fond of offals” Will commented, noticing among others Hannibal's choice of heart, liver and tongue. “What can I help you with?”

“There” Hannibal presented him with a knife. “Please slice the meat thinly, this way, as evenly as you can.”

Will nodded, took the knife and put it down near the cutting plank before going to wash his hands and put on an apron of his own.

“This tongue is quite slender” he noticed once back to his work surface. “From a veil, perhaps?”

“You have a sharp eye” Hannibal answered, visibly pleased by his interest. “I know it doesn't look very appealing right now, but trust me, it will taste heavenly.”

Will's face twitched lightly, but he got down to work. Hannibal watched him with piercing eyes, a content look on his collected features.

He really seemed to enjoy cooking with Will.

“So, tell me” he asked the younger man. “What is it about that new murder that upsets you?”

Will couldn't hide a slight smile.

“Does it show that much?”

“Maybe I am starting to know you” Hannibal answered with a smile.

Will shook his head lightly, amused at his answer. Since his going out of the hospital, his relationship with Dr Lecter had become more casual, agreeably more relaxed, and very much friendly.

They hadn't talked about that kiss again.

“There was a red carnation at the crime scene” Will exposed as he cautiously sliced the flesh. “A sort of... peace offering of some sort, like a proposition of truth, if I dare say so.”

“Red carnation are also meant to pay one's respect to another” Hannibal commented casually. “Maybe the Ripper decided to show others your value.”

“Well, yes, I'm not sure I want his attention” Will said, quite busy finishing up his slicing. “The last thing one would like on Earth would be to end up involved with such a killer.”

Hannibal let go of his own preparation, calmly wiping blood of his hands. Then he slowly went to Will, who was now failing at properly cutting the liver.

“There” he said, putting himself behind him, close against his back, and taking his hands into his. “You grab the meat as such, a firm grip for it not to slide, and don't cut straight, rather with an angle.”

At first, Will felt petrified against him, his back almost burnt by the warmth of the doctor, his hands and wrists pliant into his.

His heart raced madly in his chest; he wondered if Lecter could feel it.

Hannibal's cheek was against him, very hot, but focused on the task at hands.

They cut the liver together, Hannibal's hands on Will's, their arms and body pressed against each other, a sort of sensuality Will had not experienced since...

Ever.

When the meat was entirely sliced up, Hannibal didn't let go of him, not immediately; he rather stayed a bit pressed against him, gently nuzzling his curls with the tip of his nose, smelling his hair.

Will hesitated at first, but he eventually let go, leaning back into this warmth, closing his eyes restfully, his head on Hannibal's shoulder.

Comforted. Everything about Hannibal felt reassuring. Soothing.

Safe.

“Now for the actual cooking” Hannibal whispered into his ear, leaving him cold, alone, and disappointed.

He went back to his previous place in the kitchen, then rose sharp eyes to Will.

“Come here, I'd like to show you how to coat this.”

Coating wasn't exactly difficult; and Hannibal's mastership of sauté food was truly pleasurable to the eye.

The difficult part was keeping one's facial expressions under decent control.

For some reason, Will found himself fascinated, sucked up into Hannibal's gestures, much to the satisfaction of the older man, who didn't dissimulate a contented grin.

When the meat was properly sautéed, Lecter arranged it on a porcelain plate and asked Will to put on it the cucumber foam he wanted to use as seasoning.

It looked so eerily spongy Will couldn't help dipping the tip of his finger in it.

Then he brought it to his mouth, both to cleanse himself up and remove the evidence of his doing; but Hannibal had noticed, and was giving him a long, indecipherable look.

“I didn't mean to be... *rude*” Will said, for lack of a better word. “It just seemed so strange; I'd never tasted cucumber as a foam before.”

Hannibal was meticulously cleansing his hands on a dishtowel; eyes focused on Will, which made him uncomfortable.

“Is diner about to be ready?” he asked, feeling very impolite at asking this to his host but also unable of finding a better diversion of conversation.

“It depends” Hannibal said, getting closer.

He was now at less than arm's length, as decent and collected as ever.

He looked at the bowl of pale, greenish foam Will had previously tasted, and dove a finger in it, getting it up covered in the spongy substance.

He then brought it to his mouth and licked it lightly.

“It might be slightly lacking in peppermint” he commented. “What do you think?”

Saying that, he brought his finger to Will's lips, visibly inviting him to judge by himself.

Will swallowed eerily. He wasn't very sure he felt comfortable engaging in... food plays or whatever it was; but Hannibal had a way of bringing those things out of him.

Tentatively, he parted his lips and took the tip of the presented index in his mouth, his tongue coyly daring a lick.

Then he turned away, embarrassed and twitching.

“I think it's good” he said, feeling himself on fire. “Very fresh.”

Hannibal looked at him in meditation, and Will felt ill-at-ease.

“Maybe I could set the table” he offered.

“You could” Hannibal said, cleansing his finger on a dishtowel. “But you could also let me do this” he added, gently taking the side of his jaw in one hand to have him face him, Will's gaze lost in whatever mist he felt safer in than now.

Hannibal contemplated him for a moment, then brought their lips together.

It was fierce, as always.

How came such a collected man could turn into such a beast when passion was involved?

They hadn't kissed or touched since that noon at the hospital, but Will remembered vividly Lecter's fierceness then.

His mouth, greedy and demanding.

Now his hands, insidious, hands who took without asking.

They crawled on his back like rapid spiders, then slid under his shirt, palms spread flat on the skin of his back; he wished he could have done the same to Hannibal, but he never seemed to be given time enough to properly act on it.

He managed to loosen a bit the collar of his shirt, though, enough to take a glimpse at the base of his neck and collarbone.

At first, Hannibal trapped him against the sink counter; it was just kisses then.

But he suddenly changed his mind, pushed him against the opposite work table, where all his ingredients and cooking tools laid, and pinned him against the harsh border for a moment with bites and kisses.

Will gently slid his fingers through Hannibal's hair; they felt soft, unexpectedly; he probably used some sort of hair product that did not turn strands of hair into cardboard. His skin felt quite smooth too, for a person his age; obviously he took great care of his body.

Then Hannibal started nibbling and sucking at his neck and Will forgot for a moment all about analysis.

He bent his neck backwards, to give him better access, feeling both too exposed and too stimulated to do anything about it.

Hannibal's lips went back to his mouth, looking him in the eyes; then he carefully removed his glasses, that he put- somewhere, Will couldn't focus enough to remember.

The elder man slid a hand against his back, up to down, until it rested firmly at the jointure of Will's tigh and bottom; with the other hand, he took a knife.

For an instant Will, just, couldn't, *think*, stupor and petrification all over his body. The next moment, Hannibal had slit his shirt open with it, and its buttons rolled messily all over the floor.

“I liked this shirt” Will complained mildly, his breath still short from the rush of emotion.

“And I like it better off of you” Hannibal commented, lifting the safe part of the knife up to rise and steady Will's chin with it, then stealing a kiss.

He then put the knife down, now at the task of getting the rest of the shirt partly off of Will, pushing it back in such a way the younger man's arms' movements where hindered and almost shackled behind his back.

“I don't- I don't like that I can't move” Will commented, trying to get out of his sleeves -but Lecter stopped it from doing that.

“You trust me, yes?” he whispered against his mouth, piercing him with his dark gaze.

Will thought about the knife. He swallowed, uncomfortable.

“I'd rather have my hands free” he said, and got an arm out of the shirt.

Lecter let him, observing him like a bird of prey; then he grabbed him by the hips and lifted him over the counter, spreading him quite harshly on his back like a beast before the slaughter.

“I'm not one of your roast beef” Will chuckled, “roughening me up isn't going to tenderise me.”

He thought the comparison was funny until Hannibal all but attacked him, sinking his teeth in the soft flesh of his shoulder, digging his fingers in his flanks like some sort of maddened animal.

It didn't hurt much; but it was overstimulating, and his mind almost blanked out a moment.

When he came back from this stroke of stupor, the rest of his clothes had been messily pushed away, still dangling from his limbs like some sort of pelt shreds. Hannibal was biting on his exposed stomach and chest, as if feeding on him, like a scavenger snatching chunks of meat from a carcass.

Will gently slid his hands into Hannibal's messy hair, then rose it up firmly, meeting his dark, kind of at a loss eyes.

“We have all the time, Hannibal” he whispered, voice warm and comforting. “I'm not going anywhere, and I don't mind if diner gets cold or anything. You don't have to be... *impatient*, like this.”

He straightened up, now facing Lecter who, unusually enough, looked at him seeming slightly distraught.

He lightly caressed the contour of his jaw, his messy strokes of hair, and pressed a kiss on Hannibal's forehead.

“I'm not going anywhere” he repeated, stroking his back gently.

Hannibal's hands closed around his waist like an iron belt.

“You wouldn't dare” Lecter whispered in the hollow of his ear, perhaps jokingly, but his tone serious.

Will rubbed the curls of his brown mane in Hannibal's own hair, eyes closed, breathing soundlessly.

“Kiss me” he asked.

Hannibal was about to attack his lips with fierceness again, but Will stopped him by pressing slightly a hand on his jaw.

“Gently”, he said.

Hannibal hesitated, but obeyed, not as tenderly as one could, but with much less violence than before.

“Good” Will whispered when the kissing was over, strokes and licks and caresses rather than famished biting and battle of tongues.

Eyes still closed, he nibbled gently at Hannibal's jawline, slowly descending to his neck, where he stilled his mouth and sucked.

Hannibal didn't seem used to such a treatment. Will could feel his pulse raising under his lips; his usually sharp eyes seemed caught in slight disarray, and he didn't move at all, like a tiger suddenly faced with a danger he'd never imagined.

Almost as if he was new in the matters of lovemaking.

“Now” Will whispered in his hear, “be gentle. Make me yours.”

Chapter End Notes

Only one more chapter to go! We're almost done there people :)

EDIT: Future me would like to add, to past me: no, it's not. Your brain didn't stop typing after that.

Lamb's heart

Chapter Summary

Hannibal is developing a new kind of relationship with Will, one he had not accounted for when he started crafting his web of lies...

Spoilers for the 10 first minutes of Red Dragon (the film).

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Will opened his eyes on the following morning, his gaze fall into Hannibal's, who was staring at him, as cold and silent as a snake.

They were laying together in bed, not too close, but face to face.

Will inhaled deeply, not moving an inch but for his chest, his mind still quiet at this early hour.

Hannibal's hair was a mess. Bangs of it had fallen on his forehead, and almost into his eyes, but the man made no gesture to push it aside.

He was far too occupied scrutinising Will's features for it, devouring his face with his gaze only, plunged into a deep, obscure pondering that turned his eyes black.

Slowly, lazily as he was still quite sleepy, Will lifted an hand and reached for Hannibal's hair, stroking it gently aside so to look better at the other's man face.

“I suppose I'm now officially done as your patient, Dr Lecter” Will said jokingly. “If sleeping with one's therapist isn't seen as a breach of contract, then I don't know what is.”

Hannibal seized his wist, fast as a striking snake, his fixed, unreadable look still piercing him in wonder.

Then he lowered his gaze, looked at the opened hand, and gently dug his teeth into its palm.

Will cringed lightly, half a smile cracking open on his face. “Shouldn't we have breakfast first? So you don't eat me right up.”

But Hannibal's mouth was biting now on his wrist, slowly nibbling his way up to his lips, lightly, gently, as Will had taught him too on the eve of that day.

When his teeth reached the side of this neck, Will gave in and let himself sink back into the sheets.

*

Hannibal insisted on making a proper breakfast, obviously, so Will was left wandering by himself in his house, with only pants on and dishevelled hair that he dumbly tried to comb with his sole fingers while visiting the place.

Lecter's room was still unknown to him, and he noticed there a wide variety of beautiful books, all carefully aligned on four elegant wooden shelves.

That reminded him of the essays on psychoanalysis that adorned Hannibal's office, which he felt very interested in; so he went downstairs to rummage in his magnificent collection.

Most tomes were a very elaborate, and probably expensive, edition of brown covers laced with gold threads. Of course they were arranged by theme, and by authors among those themes. Safe for one actually, Will noticed, surprised at how Campbell's *Psychiatric Dictionary* had been slid in-between a copy of *Intelligence, Heredity and Environment* and *The General Factor of Intelligence* by Grigorenko and Sternberg.

Dr Lecter would not approve of this untidiness.

Will thus took the book and started looking for its proper location on the shelves. Exotic items tastefully adorned them; African statuettes, a delicate Japanese dagger, even a set of sharps, probably Aboriginals arrows near the section of books that interested him. He was examining them, arranged in a short wooden quiver, when his little finger got caught in a thin thread that went out of the pages of the book he was holding; it was a long, dark hair.

Just as Abigail's, Will thought, his heart aching painfully.

He remembered talking to her at the hospital; she had been twisting one hair just like this one between pale fingers, and had told him she tended to use one as a bookmark when she didn't have a piece of paper at hand. “That drove my mother crazy”, she had said.

Abigail.

Will remembered her face vividly, her clear, blue eyes, pale skin, black hair; such a young girl he had killed.

Feeling nauseous, he was about to put the book back on the shelf, when some cruel, inner voice of his whispered *that wouldn't be right*.

So he carefully looked for the pages the hair was caught in-between. Of course it wasn't Abigail's hair, why would it be? He still had to open the tome.

“Will?” Lecter called, suddenly appearing inside the doorframe, wearing his sober white cooking apron on a striped shirt and carrying a knife, impeccable as always. “You may be pleased to know breakfast is about to be served. I hope you did not mind too much the delay.” He interrupted himself, noticing Will was holding one of his books. “I see you have taken interest in my collection” he said, smiling slightly. “Do you wish me to lend you that volume?”

“It's... just a common dictionary” Will answered, his voice a bit faint. “I... I found a hair in it; it reminded me of Abigail.”

Hannibal seemed to slightly tense at that.

“You cannot linger in those thoughts, Will” he said. “They are dangerous to your sanity.”

“I... *killed* her, Hannibal. My sanity is very much compromised” Will answered, his head twitching, his eyes almost closed by a mad blinking. “I still think I should go to the police” he whispered. “But there's no evidence left, is it?...”

His tone was almost pleading.

Hannibal went to him, still holding his wide cooking knife, and spread a hand towards him.

“Give me that book” he demanded. “And stop blaming yourself for what happened. You were sick, Will.”

Graham didn't seem convinced, but he started closing the dictionary to hand it over to Hannibal nonetheless.

That's when a word caught his sight.

A word he knew too well.

Encephalitis.

It was like hearing a hundred locks click open in a wide room full of doors.

This *was* Abigail's hair after all.

She had been leafing through this book. She had found a definition that fitted Will's symptoms. She had felt weirded out enough about it to leave a bookmark –in a *dictionary*, and then had gone to the nearest psychologist to ask about it.

She had gone straight to *Hannibal*.

“You knew” Will whispered. “You *knew* it was encephalitis. That's how you guessed so accurately when the doctors wondered what I had at the hospital –because you already *knew*.”

“I suspected” Hannibal corrected him. “But I couldn't be sure. And what Dr Sutcliffe had told me discarded it.”

“Yet you *insisted* it was mental illness” Will said, disoriented. “You tried your best to *convince me* I was loosing my mind. What did you tell Abigail? Why didn't she talk to me abo–“

*Because she had **died** that night*.

The dictionary left Will Graham's hand, falling heavily on the ground.

Lecter looked slightly concerned. “I am not sure what you are implying” he said, making a gesture to pick up the volume and set it neatly on the nearest self. “But I could not ignore the possibility of mental illness simply because I did not want it to be true. Surely you understand.”

Wide eyed, Will was shaking his head in disbelief.

He saw. Finally, he *saw*.

The man was turning his head slightly to the left, exactly in the same way he did each time he was being defiant of something.

“Will. I know I let you down as your therapist, and I am sincerely sorry about it, but I hope you can still trust me as a friend. Trust that I only want what is best for you.”

But Will could now see through the lies.

There *he* was, standing straight before him, elegant and collected and cold, not Dr Hannibal Lecter but *him*, the *monster*, the *enemy; that* man.

It made so much sense.

The copycat murders.

The police officer dead in Will's bed at the hospital.

Dr Sutcliffe...

Hannibal had *planned* for Will to go insane. He had *planned* for him to–

"*Did I even **kill** Abigail?*" he asked, his voice breaking from shock and realisation, eyes trembling like clear drops of water in a crystal glass.

The other looked at him, frowning slightly his brown.

Then he adverted his head an instant, with closed eyes, lips pressed together in vexation, all pretence gone from his sharps features.

"I liked her" he then said in a tranquil voice, looking straight back at Will. "It was... disquieting, parting with her. But she knew far too much; such a clever girl. It was a choice between either loosing her or eventually loosing *you*."

Will felt like he had received a blow to the gut at that, at hearing those words coming out of that mouth, that mouth which was so close to him now, which had eaten human flesh –Will suddenly realised what exactly he had been fed all those months when Hannibal was cooking.

But his sudden strike of nausea was cut short as he realised just *how much* his hands were trembling, and how feverish he felt right then, and how *painful* that blow to the gut was still feeling, trickling warmth and wetness on his pants.

There was blood everywhere.

The Ripper was looking at him, straight into his eyes, upset disappointment on his face.

Will had a cooking knife thrust into his gut.

Blood was flowing away from him, draining him of its warmth. His members trembled uncontrollably, and he felt so *cold*.

He seized the arm that had stricken him.

"Shhhh..." the Ripper gently whispered in a concerned voice, sliding a comforting hand on his shoulder. "Don't move. You're in shock now. I don't want you to feel any pain."

He sounded so genuine; how could he be so calm? Will's breath was now broken and the grip of the cold paralysing; he felt impaled, lifted against the wood of the shelves by the wide cooking knife, just another of Hannibal's meals.

The Ripper got closer, his cheek on Will's cheek, his words a caressing breath in his ear. "In a moment, you will begin to feel light-headed, then drowsy. Don't resist; it's so gentle, like slipping into a warm bath... I regret it came to this, Will, but every game must have its ending."

For a split second, hearing the Ripper's words, those words that had already been spoken in another time, another world, a world where Hannibal and him had been friends, he wished to give in.

To stop resisting, to lean into them and to simply, gently, close his eyes.

Lean in and put his forehead on Lecter's shoulder, go to sleep.

It would be so much easier.

But those words came straight out of what had supposedly been mere delusions, and the Ripper's breath was hot against his neck.

How could he have been so blind?

His trembling hand wandered, looking for a way to escape, touching wood and steel; but eventually his legs gave up, and Hannibal caught him gently as he was falling, laying him down softly on the floor.

The pain of the stab was just unbearable. He wanted it all to *stop*.

“Remarkable boy” the Ripper whispered tenderly, stroking Will's cheek with a light hand. “I do admire your courage.”

Graham felt another shard of sharp pain paralyse his shaking body when the Ripper got the knife out of his side; blood came out flowing like a red river.

Then Hannibal rose his weapon, looking at Will composedly, his eyes clear and unrepentant, astonishingly devoid of any passion or hatred.

“I think I'll eat your heart” he said quietly –a hint of something strange sparkling in his eyes– and in his throat a light shiver.

He could have killed Will ten time by now, but he hadn't; and by then Graham had collected enough strength to push what he had managed to grab on his way down hard into his flank: it was a handful of those arrows he had observed earlier in a quiver.

Hannibal startled; clearly he was more used to stabbing people that to being stabbed by them; he got up, going back a few steps, almost all the way to his desk.

Will tried to breath, laying paralysed on the floor, gathering all his might to lift a shaking hand up to his wound to stop the blood flow.

His lips where already ice cold.

He heard a noise; it was Lecter getting rid of the arrows sticking out of him; then the Ripper moved back to where Will was, quick in spite of a limp, like the spider that pursues you even when you've abandoned the fight.

Will automatically reached for that gun he didn't wear on him at the moment, desperate for anything, *anything* that could save him.

Then Hannibal was on him and he felt teeth sink in his flesh.

*

It wasn't supposed to happen. Abigail had found out about the encephalitis, but he wouldn't have had to kill her if she had not understood then that he was playing them all. That had been... inconvenient.

Hannibal had truly liked Abigail.

But know it felt even worse. The look on Will's face when he pieced it all together. The look on his face when Hannibal sunk that knife into him –so much like the one he wore when they were making love.

Short breath, parted lips –only this was much more final.

And Hannibal didn't like it.

Sure, this was all quite exciting, entertaining, *new;* but it was also going to end, and that ending would last always.

Will would be gone.

At first, he had just thought he would eat him, eat his heart, this wonderful, probably scrumptious, beating offering.

But then he had thought this heart would beat no more.

Sure, their relationship was ruined –unless he managed to find a way to turn Will and bring him to his side.

Which was going to prove difficult, since he had dug a knife in him.

Hannibal had just done what he used to: cut lose ends.

But now that his knife was set fully in Will, now that comforting words where pouring out of his mouth, he didn't want this.

The spider in his heart was laughing at him.

He was seeing Lady Murasaki walking away from him, he was remembering Mischa turning a pleading head towards him, just before...

Slaughter. He should have been able to avoid that. There should have been a way for him to persuade Will to trust him even as the killer he had been chasing.

For the first time in years, he felt quite at a loss.

Will was on the floor now; he stroke his face. Such a remarkable boy.

It was too late.

He would eat his heart, the noblest part of him; he would honour his death and make the most of it, perhaps even invite Alana so she could pay her respects. And then send dear Jack a helpful hand...

Most importantly, he would savour Will's brain. By himself. No sharing.

Will's... *still* brain.

When the arrows sank into his flank, he could have sighed in relief.

Shock came first, of course; but it was the realisation that even then, at the brink of death, Will would never cease to surprise him that prevailed.

When he dug his teeth into Will's neck it was conscious; it was to mark him.

He would rather devour him alive than murdered.

Will was different, he suddenly understood. Will was special. He should live.

He tasted good, even raw.

Hannibal had to find a way to turn him, right now, before Will's breath stopped.

Make him his.

He felt with proud pleasure a sharp amount of pain suddenly attacking the insides of his wound.

The man was digging his thumb in, trying to weaken Hannibal, to provoke enough discomfort that he would lay back; Hannibal caught his wrist, savouring the flesh he had bitten of, relishing in that moment where their eyes intertwined, feverish and desperate on Will's part, composed yet oddly doubtful on Hannibal's.

“I wish I did not have to kill you” he said softly, carefully licking the blood off his lips. “You fascinate me.”

Will's eyes were trembling in despair, looking for an escape, lost in the whiteness of his face, which was enhanced by the dark curls of his hair.

His body would grow cold, still, and rigid; and he wouldn't be able to surprise Hannibal anymore.

At least he would become part of him.

Hannibal lowered his head to kiss him, gently, like one drinks, savouring his mouth like the best of his wines; this would come to an end now; every feast reached an end.

Will bit him, harshly, drawing blood from his lower lip.

Hannibal smiled at that, satisfied with the angered look on Will's previously desperate features –“Don't *mock* me” he cringed, a faint amount of his own blood tainting the white of his teeth.

“I will honour you” Hannibal promised gently. “No one deserves it more.”

“I am saddened it came to this” he added, pondering an instant and wondering at that thought.

He remembered melting in Will earlier on, his skin tingling at the souvenir of the other's warmth, burning up, Will having the exact same look on him, but from pleasure and not shock nor pain.

Is that what he should have done, given in to this other urge, this craving he had to take him while sparing his life, giving in to the carnal without spilling blood on them both? Transferring murder into the sensual, and have Will beg for him to stop, but only to ask for more the second after.

It would be good to see Will beg, he thought, already devising a way to achieve that.

If Will Graham was going to die, he would truly make the most of it.

But then Will did, again, something unexpected; he found strength and a way to sneak his free hand to Hannibal's wound, and attacked it again, without mercy, sinking his fingers in just like Hannibal had countlessly stabbed.

So, *that's how it felt*.

Darkness and cold hurriedly closed up on his mind, erasing his conscience and lucidity; but at the precise moment shock and his thoughts intertwined in discomfort and obscurity,

among the glimpses of prison walls and lost commodities he envisioned in his future,

overshadowing his enraged fight to preserve his lucidity and avoid sinking into darkness,

there floated a contented thought, a leaf that had softly fallen on the pond, cradled by a gentle wind, and this thought was

Graham will live.

Chapter End Notes

It *might* write a sequel. Not sure about it thought, so let's consider it complete for now. I hope you enjoyed it.
EDIT: Said Sequel was written. It starts in the next chapters.

Cheap beer

Chapter Summary

> Will Graham eventually discovered Hannibal's true identity, which lead to Hannibal's arrest and much trauma on Will's part. Years later, after the events of Red Dragon, Silence of the Lambs and Hannibal, they meet again... but Hannibal comes with a bargain.
>
> Spoilers for the films mentioned and Hannibal Rising. Also, I changed the Mischa story for it to fit in the 2000.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When somebody knocked at Will's door that day, he was sitting drunk in a chair, staring at the void, memories of eviscerated bodies playing around in his mind.

Bloody hands.

Cut off people.

Fear, murder and pain.

A regular thursday afternoon.

The stranger knocked again, in a firm yet measured way.

Will's head twitched and slowly turned to look at the door, watching it as if it could unlock on its own.

Eventually, he got up.

A beer bottle still in his hand, already empty.

Other, similar recipients laying messily on the floor, which he moved aside with his bare feet.

He was still fit, though haggard and stinking drunk, Hannibal thought when the door opened, noticing a string of white hairs intertwined with the dark curls.

Will's face didn't show any reaction of surprise when he saw him, though he flinched and dropped his beer bottle, which bumped and bounced on the sticky floor.

Hannibal pulled a disapproving face at the mess, slightly wrinkling his nose.

“You come to kill me?” Will simply asked in a intoxicated, stodgy voice, leaning on the door frame like a sleepy man. “You come to *rip my heart out and eat it*?” he added with a pout of contempt.

“I come as a friend, Will” Hannibal said peacefully. “It has been a long time since our last meeting.”

“It should have been longer” Will said. “Last time you sent a murderer after my wife and kid, and he almost killed me.”

“You were not supposed to arrive on time at the house” Lecter said, as a matter of excuse. “How is your family?”

“Away” Will answered. “I'm divorced as you'd guess, and I don't get to see my son that much –who'd have a mad drunk for a father?”

He designated the mess inside of his house by a motion of the chin. “Alcohol soothes it. You know I had to stay in a mental institution? Thank you for that by the way. It was a reeeal thrill.”

Hannibal looked at him attentively, then rose his left hand to gently stroke a brown, spiced-with-white curl.

“*Don't. TOUCH me!*” Will spat with the utmost expression of scorn, rejecting his hand harshly. “*What* are you doing here? What do you *want*? If you've come to kill me just do it *now*, no warning, no mind games –and if not just– *get out!*”

Hannibal looked almost offended at his rudeness.

“Oh no no no *no*, *Lecter*, you don't give me that look, you *of ALL PEOPLE* don't give me that look, you have no right, *NO RIGHT* to look at me like that –you did that to me– *you did that to my mind!*” He twitched and shook his index finger at him, like some drunk teacher giving a lecture “*You* broke *me*. Get out of my yard.”

Hannibal considered the tips of his finely polished shoes for a second, then firmly pushed Will inside and came in.

The house was small, dark, stinky, sticky and atrociously filthy.

“I'll be calling the police, then” Will informed him, going for the phone.

Lecter casually tore the phone wire from the wall with his left hand.

“You should sit down” he said, using the same hand to push Will back in a worn out chair.

Graham didn't even protest; as soon as he was sat, he resumed his usual posture of apathy, staring at the void in silent agony.

Lecter got out of his jacket and started by opening the windows; the small house was enclosed by a garden, surrounded by a forest; nobody would pass by it casually.

“A serial killer scrubbing my floor” Will suddenly chuckled after a couple hours of cleaning up, when Hannibal had ended up mopping the place with a worn out broom. “Did you come to nurse me better, *Dr Lecter?*” Graham asked, spiting his name out in disdain. “Are you going to *feed* me too?”

Hannibal could see him better now that the house was alight, wide shadows under his eyes, a yellowish tone of skin, a bit of blood in the white of his eyes.

He had thrown out many beer bottles, but Will's leaver couldn't do as much.

“You drink too much” he said, and Graham chuckled.

“You're telling that to a drunk” he mocked. “As the person who turned him into one.”

The house felt saner now that it had been cleaned, but Graham was still reeking of alcohol and sadness.

“Will. I want you to take a shower” Hannibal said.

“You're not my babysitter” Will said bitterly. “You're not my anything. You don't get to demand *anything* from me.”

Lecter unstuck the broom out of his right hand and came to Will, took him by the shoulder with his left hand, and tried to get him up.

“*DON'T TOUCH ME!*” Will screamed again, pushing him away with violence. “”What gives you the right... What gives you *the right!*...”

“Will” Hannibal called. “Will. Listen to me. You're tired. You're drunk. You need a shower.”

“*I need you out of my mind*” Will sobbed in a faint voice, hands pressed hard against the sides of his head. “*I need you **out** of my **mind**!*...”

Hannibal gently slid an arm under Will's pit to guide him towards the shower, which he started running, helping Will out of his clothes and putting him under the warm stream of water.

“Now, you start scrubbing”, he said, taking Will's head between two hands –one stiff and unmoving against his cheek. “I will be making diner downstairs. You take your time. It will all work out fine.” He ended by kissing him on the forehead, gently, then pushing him under the running water and giving him the soap.

“Go on” he said. “Trust in me, it will make you feel better.”

*

When Will got downstairs, he was indeed feeling fresher, though still quite intoxicated. His mind still cut him with sharp memories of pain, but it was manageable.

Hannibal was adding the final touch to a tasteful diner table, wearing Will's apron and carrying things mainly with one hand.

“I didn't have that in the fridge” Will commented, noticing the omelette and chicken, and everything else, really.

“I went shopping” Hannibal said.

“Who did you kill?”

The other smirked, but Will was serious, looking tired and uncaring.

“Nobody” Lecter answered. “This is but a simple course. Though I will cook for you properly again, if you want.”

Will didn't bother to answer and threw his towel on the worn up chair.

“Why are you here?” he asked, sitting tiredly at the table, in front of a visibly vegan dish. “Cleaning my house? Making me diner? You're acting like the perfect husband that no-one would want home.”

“I came to see you” Hannibal answered matter-of-factly. “As an old friend. Surely you know things have changed those last years.”

“I learnt about Clarice” Will said. “She wanted to talk to me after what happened. She told me about your hand. Why did you do that by the way? Since when do you care about others more than of your own, selfish self?”

Hannibal almost smiled.

“Do you remember that night in my office, when I stabbed you?”

“Vividly” Will said, putting a palm where Lecter had carved a scar. “How could I forget.”

His face and tone were grim.

“I also remember you bit off a piece of my neck.”

“Well, that got me thinking” Hannibal stated, getting off his apron and coming to sit in front of Will. “That killing people perhaps wasn't the only way of handling complicated relationships. And Clarice helped me understand that sometimes, you have to do... compromises, to maintain said relationship.”

“Clarice must have been quite a woman to help you get something that obvious” Will said mockingly.

“She was really nervous when I first met her” Hannibal recalled with affection. “Twitching, blinking and never looking at me quite properly in the eyes. A pretty, clear-eyed brunette. Very brave, remarkable girl; you would have appreciated her.”

He took a mouthful of seasoned omelette and Will Graham sent him a sharp look.

“You like her” he said.

“Of course I do. I like many people, Will. For instance, I like you.”

“It didn't stop you from trying to kill me.”

“Why would it?” Hannibal answered casually. “You were an FBI agent; you know that caring about someone doesn't stop anyone from killing them. Are you not hungry?”

Will hadn't touched his plate yet. He was far more occupied with staring straight at Hannibal.

Lecter had stuck a knife in his gloved hand prothesis, who visibly was fashioned in a way that allowed him to grip objects of variable size. He was managing quite well with it, probably thanks to months of practice. Feeling his gaze, Hannibal rose his eyes to Will's.

“Do eat, please. I promise there is no-one here but us.”

Will shook his head.

“Cannibalistic joke” he said, slightly scornful. “Very humorous.”

“Indeed” Lecter said. “At times it would become frustrating to have nobody to share those with.”

“I'm no sure you're making the best use of the word *no body*” Will answered –and Hannibal cracked a smile.

“I did miss you” he said, eyes sparkling oddly. “All those years, as a runaway... I wondered what had become of you.”

Will made a gesture to designate the place.

“This” he said. “Mental institution, divorce, alcohol and despair. And *I* am the sane one.”

“Does murder imply insanity?” Hannibal said. “I do not think so. Ah, how clumsy of me; I forgot the wine.”

He got up and got a black bottle from the fridge, that Will looked at with a glimpse of despair.

“Surely, you remember it” Lecter said, showing him the label. “Château Margaux 1995, a pure delight. Shame that we do not have the proper glasses to honour its great taste.”

“You're real hung up on me drinking that wine” Will said, but a chip in his voice discarded his pretend disdain. “Of course I should have expected it of you, offering alcohol to an alcoholic, how *thoughtful*.”

Hannibal smiled, and poured Will a half-full glass. “I hope you enjoy it” he said. “It truly is one of the greatest wines.”

“Oh, I'm not going to enjoy it” Will said, and he downed the glass in one straight swallow.

Then he sighed.

“Now, *that* pleases me.”

Hannibal's smile had cooled down a little, but he filled Will's glass again nonetheless.

Moments after, Will was picking at his dish with an appetite.

“So, truly, why are you here?” he asked, nibbling at a tomato and eyeing thoughtfully the slices of parma ham he had just discovered under a leaf of salad. “To kill me? To play with me? Oh, that's a silly question, of course you're going to play with me. But what else? Why did you *really* came?”

He must had eventually decided he didn't care about what he was truly eating, because he finally got some ham on his fork and into his mouth.

“Give me more wine” he demanded.

Hannibal complied, but didn't fill his glass entirely.

“I just came to see you” he repeated. “Is it so hard for you to believe?”

“Of course” Will said. “What's your hidden agenda? Have you killed all my neighbours and planted evidence against me?”

“I am not plotting anything against you” Hannibal answered. “As of yet.”

“Why not?”

“Why, should I?” Lecter said. “Do you want me to get into your mind again?”

“I would get you out of my house if I had it my way” Will said, “but visibly this is not going to happen. This wine is good.”

Hannibal smiled, but Will didn't care about his own little surrender.

“Why me?” he asked. “Since we met, all your life, it seems like it's been about me. Why?”

“You might be overestimating your value” Hannibal said in a smiling tone. “Although I do hold you dear.”

“I'm overestimating nothing” Will interrupted harshly. “Or do you think I completely forgot myself in mental illness and alcohol? I did my research, Lecter, I did my profiling. I remember the tone you had when I came to prison to ask for your help with the Tooth Fairy case. You were practically *begging* for my attention.”

“I never beg” Lecter said, coldly.

“You sent that killer after my family. You were jealous.”

“I wanted you to *play*” Hannibal corrected him. “You weren't doing your utmost. Your victory would have been too easy.”

“You wanted me close” Will said. “And *yours*, alone. You were greedy. Covetous. Possessive. I'm not a possession.”

“I never saw you as one.”

He wasn't looking at him, casually finishing his dish, apparently undisturbed.

“You're being defensive” Will noted.

“Or maybe you are drunk” Hannibal stated, rising his eyes towards him and pointing at the half empty bottle. “I have to say that am quite disappointed in your misguided analysis of my person. Perhaps you should stop drinking. I do deserve more than misfires.”

He immobilised himself, looking straight at Graham as if waiting for an apology.

Will was shaking his head, almost imperceptibly, eyes wide in realisation.

“You...” he frowned. “...are *in love* with me” he stated in disbelief.

Hannibal's expression of disdain half-turned into one that meant nothing, probably because of the surprise.

“I have a professional interest in you” he corrected, not even blinking once. “I find your mind quite fascinating. One to match my own.”

“Are you being *defensive* again, Dr Lecter?” Will said, his head twitching.

Hannibal's eyes narrowed.

“I am merely stating facts” he answered, an odd feeling bubbling in his chest.

He suddenly felt like a rat caught in a trap of his own devising.

“All those years, I was always in your mind” Graham said, looking like a feline around a prey.

“Were I in yours?” Hannibal asked with feign curiosity.

He already knew the answer to that.

“And all those years you knew that if people learnt about what you did, they would reject you. But you thought you were doing nothing wrong” Will said. “It must have felt lonely.”

Hannibal smirked. “I am conscious people think what I do is unethical, Will. Are you trying to psychoanalyse me? *You won't like me when I psychoanalysed*.”

“I wouldn't like you anyway” Will retorted –and he noticed with satisfaction the tiniest little twitch on the corner of Hannibal's eye.

“I will *never* love you, Hannibal” he insisted, just to confirm his witnessing.

“I am not expecting you to” Hannibal answered casually.

Damn, the man was good.

“You should play poker” Will stated.

“How do you know I don't?” Lecter answered with a smile.

Will suddenly remembered that he once found him charming.

“I know about Mischa” he said bluntly, dropping it like a bomb on the diner table.

Chapter End Notes

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A ONE-SHOT FANFIC okay breathe.

A mirror shattered

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal comes with a bargain, and Will Graham is lost. Or, is he? He responded quite well during the first round of their encounter...
>
> Spoilers for the film Hannibal Rising, though I changed the Mischa story for it to fit in the 2000.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I know about Mischa” Will said bluntly, dropping it like a bomb on the diner table.

Scrutinising Lecter's features all the while.

Hannibal froze. His nostrils flared, his jaws tightened, and Graham noticed the movement made by his Adam's apple when he swallowed. Then time went back to its course, and Lecter looked at him.

“You heard of my little sister” he said. “I am impressed. You would have had to search all Europe to come by my genealogy”.

“Not all Europe, just its police quarters” Will replied. “I didn't know you were a Count.”

“Are you that easily impressed?”

“I'm impressed by how young you were when you made your first kill” Will said.

Hannibal half smiled.

“There is no proof of me doing anything” he reminded him. “Although the French do not welcome touristic visits on my part.”

“Lithuania doesn't bear you his its heart either” Will said. “And I suspect that neither do you. What happened to Mischa, Hannibal?”

Lecter half-grinned, his eyes cold as stone.

“Why, but I thought you knew” he replied. “Care for some desert?”

“I know your parents died in the collapsing of the building” Will said, while the other man got up to arrange what looked like French pastries on two plates. “And the report stated that you were trapped in a basement with your sister and six men. It is said that Mischa was pushed out through a small opening, but wasn't heard of again. So, who killed her?”

Hannibal turned back to him, having balanced both plate on his valid hand, that he arranged neatly on the table.

“I heard your son thinks his father is insane” he stated casually. “How does one deal with that?”

“The report said she had pneumonia” Will answered. “Even though you lot managed to make fire at some point; the place was damp and humid, and they thought she might have died once out.”

“Will, I have no interest in discussing that event with you. Why don't you sample your desert?”

Will smiled coldly.

Then he leaned in, both palms flat against the wood of the table, and almost *hissed*.

“*Quid pro quo* Dr Lecter. You mess with my mind, I mess with yours. Who killed Mischa?”

Hannibal had taken a spoonful off his pastry, but hadn't managed to bring it to his mouth yet. He looked at Graham in the eyes.

“Will” he warned. “You are being rude.”

“I am being *you*” Graham replied. “And *you* witnessed something then that you were utterly powerless to stop. What was it? Did they *rape* her?”

Hannibal let noisily go of his spoon and wiped his mouth with his napkin to show the conversation had taken away his appetite.

“I am afraid I will have to silence you if you don't do it yourself” he warned Will.

Graham chuckled.

“Why would I?” he said, raising his arms with a smile. “I have nothing to lose, and you're retreating for once. This is great. This *feels* great. I am having fun, aren't you?”

Hannibal, who was about to get up, glanced at Will. Then he calmly sat back and took back his spoon.

“I don't recall who killed her” he stated tranquilly. “It does not matter; they were all guilty.”

“Yet no body was found” Will said. “It's a bit... strange, is it? That some body would disappears so... soundlessly?”

Hannibal cleared his throat then took another mouthful of cream.

“You know what happened, Will. Do you want me to say it?”

“If you'd be so kind” Will grinned, without a inch of happiness.

Hannibal lifted a full spoon in front of his mouth and tranquilly looked at Will in the eyes.

“The men grew hungry” he said. “Then they noticed she was sick. There was fire and water by then, so they butchered her and made her diner. Let us finish our own meal now. This discussion does not bring the best out of idle talk.”

He was about to bring the spoon to his mouth when Will Graham leaned in over the table, whispering.

“I want to know what *you* ate to get out of there alive, *Hannibal*.”

The table flew and Graham chuckled. Was he drunk or was he mad? Hannibal was on him like a snake on a prey, fast and quick and so, *so* irritated.

“You've made a mess” Graham laughed, twisting Lecter's valid hand to have him drop his spoon. Then he bit him on the neck before Hannibal had time to, and kicked him in the stomach.

Lecter fell heavily on the floor, eyes black, furious, less of a beast and more of a murdered than ever; he went up on his legs and jumped at Will's throat.

They both fell, intertwined in the remains of diner.

Lecter's valid hand was on the wrong side of the mess, still he managed to grab a fork; underneath him, Graham was still laughing, at him, but not in joy.

“Is that your way to regain power?” Will chuckled. “Killing everyone as you please? Eating them like the beasts they all are?”

Oh, why had he allowed that man in his thoughts.

He already had the fork in hand, and truly Will wasn't fighting back much. He most probably expected to die.

Will *didn't care*.

But, looking at his tired face and soft, brown curls sprinkled in white, noticing the dark rings under his eyes and the sick colour of his skin, Hannibal sensed his hand falter.

That is what his first attempt at murdering Graham had taught him. That if you kill people you like... well. Afterwards, they're kinda dead.

And Clarice... Clarice had shown you had to step back at times, so you could get off to a better start. That you had to make some sacrifices for the sake of a relationship.

He let go of his weapon, grabbing Will's shoulder instead, burying his face his in neck and kissing, *kissing* the hell of that spot he had previously bitten of.

At first Graham struggled, visibly caught in some traumatic memory of his former attack. But then he noticed the lack of actual pain, and his body stilled.

He felt Lecter's prosthetic hand stroke his left flank, and the valid one caught in the soft curls of his dishevelled hair.

They were laying on the cold floor, not like fighters among broken glass, but like lovers, once more.

Hannibal was gently nuzzling his face, nibbling on the side of his jaw.

“What– what are you *doing*?” Will Graham asked in utter disbelief, visibly very shocked to be still alive.

“Your phrasing is incorrect, Will” Hannibal whispered into his ear. “It's *who*.”

Will pushed him away, looking more frightened by the situation than by the prospect of being murdered.

“You were *furious*” he said, astounded. “How comes you aren't *furious*?”

Hannibal cracked a smile.

He rose his prothetic hand in front of Will's face and gently stroke the side of Will's chin with it.

“I learnt better” he said, and leaned back to kiss him.

At first Graham impeded him from doing so, an arm barring his chest. He was looking at him in doubt and disbelief, visibly scared, and confused.

The psychological profile he had pieced up years ago had clearly been shaken.

Hannibal let him observe him for a while, like a stray dog worrying about a new master, still remembering the beatings and the yelling, still unwilling to trust.

Then he gently leaned in and kissed his parted lips, softly, delicate as a feather, and moved his kisses to Will's cheekbone, to his eye, to his forehead, his temple, his hair.

“You're doing that to mislead me” Will decided. “You want to take me by surprise, and torture me when I've started to trust you can truly change.”

“You spoke of an hidden agenda” Hannibal whispered softly. “This is it. You, here, besides me. This is what I've come to collect.”

“I'm not– I'm *not* coming back to you” Will muttered in disbelief. “What makes you think that I would–”

“Because it would be nicer that way” Hannibal said, his nose stroking the tip of Will's nose. “Because you want this to be real.”

His voice was low, intoxicating, and he smelled good, he felt so warmth, and gentle, and Will wished, *wished* so much they could be back on that day, before he knew who Hannibal really was.

“You are lying” he said.

“Perhaps” Hannibal answered. “But I could be very well telling the truth.”

“You're a sadist” Will said. “You would enjoy watching me suffer. What is it? What have you prepared? Oh, you wouldn't tell me just now. Wait after the deed is done.”

“I want you” Hannibal whispered. “Will you give yourself to me?”

Graham let out a cracked laugher, a nervous break out of anxiety. “I don't want you to be lying” he said, tears suddenly appearing at the corner of his eyes. “I just want all of this to be over. This nightmare. I want to be *sane* again, in a place where 'joyful' isn't merely a word.”

He was now grinning in pain.

“I'm broken. I'm so, I'm *so* broken, and nothing's going to fix me” he said. “It hurts, *so much*. I just want it to *stop*.”

Hannibal looked at him, and swallowed. There were tears running down on Will's cheeks.

“It's alright” he said suddenly, cradling him into his arms, kissing softly the side of Will's head. “I will protect you. I promise.”

Now, those words... He had told Mischa those words.

Will pushed away, not too harshly, wiping the tears out of his eyes.

“*Really?*” he said, dumbfounded, and his voice not the least cracked. “You... *You* want to *protect* me?”

It had been an act, Lecter realised, innerly vexed of not having taken notice. An act based on genuine feelings, but still.

“If you let me, I will”, he stated nonetheless. “I told you Will. I've changed.”

“You still kill people.”

“Yes.”

“Do you still eat them?”

“I do. And I do not plan on stopping.”

“But you're not going to kill *me?*”

“I will not” Hannibal said. “As I didn't kill Clarice. She told you that herself, did she not?”

Will looked very confused.

“So you... *do* love me” he muttered, sounding doubtful.

“If that is what you want to call it.”

“Why? What do *you* call 'it'?” Will asked.

Lecter reflected on it for a second.

“I call it partnership” he said.

“Partnership” Will repeated, rolling the weird word up on his tongue. “With you.”

“Exclusively” Hannibal warned.

“I see.”

Graham lifted an unsure hand to Hannibal's face, stroking him on the cheek, lightly.

Remembering his face.

“I can't” he said, and his hand fell. “I can't, it hurts too much.”

“What does?” Hannibal asked, gently pressing his valid hand on Will's side, comforting.

“I'm an empath” Will reminded him. “Though I don't think you quite grasp the concept.”

“But I do.”

Will chuckled, not in a merry way.

“Yes, oh, yes, of course –that I can assume your point of view– the point of view of any killer; *that*, you understand.”

“You do not have to be frightened by it” Hannibal said. “Feeling good when you kill; it is very natural.”

Will slid a hand through his messy curls.

Still grinning in that deranged, visibly unhappy way of his.

“*I empathise with the victims **too***” he said. “Can you understand that? On every crime scene, I could just *feel* the victim's horror, their painful agony –as I could feel the suffering of their relatives. An empath doesn't merrily *chose* who they empathise with. I can just... guide it.”

Hannibal looked at him in lazy interest, unmoved and unsurprised, and Will realised *he knew*.

“Did you enjoy it?” he asked bluntly. “That I could feel their pain? Jack's doubts? My... colleagues pondering about my condition?”

“It was... interesting” Lecter answered, and Will pushed him away.

He got up dumbly, almost tripping on himself, and leaned on the nearby chair.

“You don't mind that I suffer. You *enjoy* it. And yet, you want us to be... 'partners'.”

“Yes” Hannibal said simply, getting up. “I am fond of observing your mind at work. This is all very coherent.”

“Not between 'partners', no!” Will shouted in exasperation.

“What do you want, Will?” Lecter asked, cocking slightly his head on the side, observing him. “Why are you here, drunk and alone, instead of saving lives on the field? You were sacrificing yourself to save lives. What changed?”

“Stop. Stop it. You're not my therapist anym– you're *not* my therapist.”

“Tell me” Lecter insisted, calm and quiet as ever. “Why are you not saving lives now, Will?”

Graham stuttered, then looked away in pain.

“You know. You know why” he said, in a very low tone.

“Would I ask if I knew?”

“Of course you would. You want nothing more than torture me.”

Hannibal smirked.

“You felt that you were not making enough difference” he stated casually, and Will twitched, then looked at his feet, hands grabbing the top of the chair, hard.

“So much pain” he muttered. “So many murders. Like a flow, never ending. I just want it to *end*.”

“The police takes it slow” Lecter commented. “One murder at a time, and not always with a conviction –I am proof enough that murderers wander free.”

“Yes” Will whispered.

One word, such suffering.

Hannibal took a few steps and Graham recoiled, letting go of the chair. “Don't come near me.”

“*I am always near you*” Hannibal said slowly.

Chapter End Notes

Now, there should not be more than two or three chapters after this one. For reals this once.

Venaison

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal and Will's confrontation is reaching its conclusion, and both of them have taken turns leading it. But there can only be one winner... can it?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"*I am always near you*" Hannibal said slowly.

There was silence.

Then Lecter stated: "I could help."

Will's eyes jumped to his, for just a moment, and Hannibal could read something in them – pleading? Hope? Shame?... Had Will already thought about...

Of course he had; they shared a mind.

"You have to go" Will said in a cracked voice. "Just go. Now."

Slowly, a smile crept on Hannibal's sensuous lips.

"Would you want that?" he asked. "That I helped you?"

"Get out."

Always scared of his own mind. Dear Will.

"Think of all the people you could *help*" Hannibal softly whispered.

"Get. *OUT!*"

Will went to him to force him outside, probably; but Hannibal just caught him between his shortened arm and his body, maintaining his twitching, nervous head firmly by a grip on his

hair.

Will's breath got rash, uneven, as his neck was slowly exposed by Lecter's iron hand, even though he had griped his wrist.

“You are scared” Hannibal noted.

“I'm always scared” Will answered, bravely.

He didn't look at him in the eyes, but tried to lift up his chin nonetheless.

“Imagine what we could do” Lecter whispered softly, almost tenderly. “Imagine you and I, united; we would be unstoppable. A perfect mind to out-rule the police. The criminals. Everybody.”

Will pressed his eyelids hard together, and shivered. “Stop it” he said.

A wild imagination.

So pure.

“We could find any murderer. And nobody would know. Jack would be... so confused.”

“I asked you to stop” Will pleaded, taking Hannibal's wrists. “Please.”

Lecter observed his face for a moment.

Then he released him.

“As you wish” he said. “But I insist that you consider my offer.”

Will took some steps back, fighting to recover his composure.

“You know I have” he said. “I can't trust you.”

Lecter's eyes grew hard.

“Of course you can. I care about you, Will.”

“You want me to *amuse* you. As soon as you stop finding me entertaining, I'm nothing but raw meat to you.”

“So?” Hannibal said. “What is your life, compared to all the lives you might save?”

Will frowned, closed his eyes, a hand lifted to his mouth; then laughed. Plainly, sadly, laughed.

“You know me so well” he said. “Pushing all the right buttons. Why is it the person who gets me so well is also that one vicious, merciless psychopath?”

Hannibal smirked and approached him; Will Graham recoiled, until his back hit the wall.

“Don't come any closer” he said, but Lecter ignored him.

When they were but a mere breath apart, Hannibal lift a hand to gently stroke Will's brown and white curls.

“You are still giving the occasional lecture for the FBI. 'The drunk teacher', they call you. You have access to cases' files.”

Will shook his head, palms flattened against the wall, like a cornered prey. “Let go of me” he said. “Get out of my mind. Go on with your life, without me. Forget about me.”

“I don't want to” Hannibal whispered softly near his ear. “And you cannot forget.”

Will let out an anguished moan, folding away. Lecter gently took him against his chest, and stroked his hair.

“You already know about some of them” he whispered. “But you are making yourself look away. You do not want to work with Agent Crawford again, am I right?”

Will's hand crawled up on Lecter's shoulder, hesitating about pushing him away again; but he eventually folded it into a fist, and rested his head against Hannibal's clavicle. Exhausted.

It reminded him of that time when being with Lecter felt soothing. His mind at peace.

So restful.

“I would not push you like Jack did” Hannibal said.

It would feel so good to believe him.

“You would lie to me and mess with my mind again.”

Lecter pondered.

“What if I don't?” he asked. “I know your mind. I know you are me. And I do not want you further destroyed.”

He cradled him.

“Think about it” he said, resting his cheek against Will's hair. “You would work at the FBI, giving the odd lecture and doing research, working on your boat motors the rest of the time ; I would be home, cooking. On the week-end, we could go fishing together. And to Florence, during the holidays. Paris, Rome, wherever we would like to.”

“The Opera” Will grinned sadly. “Where people experience so many emotions I don't know who I am anymore.”

“You know who you are.”

“My name is Will Graham, and I am not where I should be.”

He pushed away from Hannibal, quite gently.

“This can't work” he said.

Hannibal softly stroked the inside of Will's right wrist with a thumb, studying calmly his nervous face.

“Kill with me” he offered. “And take away the guilt. You need to take control over your pain, Will.”

“I don't want to kill anybody.”

“You want to; you just don't want to want it.”

Will swallowed, and shook his head.

“Get out.”

“I am never leaving you. You know that, Will.”

Will let himself slid on the floor, his arms embracing his folded legs. “Please” he pleaded. “Please, *please* go away.”

He took his head between two hands, fingers digging in the soft curls.

Hannibal went down on a knee to look at him face to face.

“You do not have to be in pain” he softly said. “You can take control over your empathy, and turn it into a weapon instead of into what is destroying you.”

Will seemed lost, clear eyes teary, trembling; he looked at Lecter's in disarray.

“You don't feel guilty about what you do” he whispered.

“I do not.”

“There's no emotion in your murders, save the satisfaction of success. You are not avenging yourself anymore. You are just... making the most of life.”

Hannibal looked at him calmly, awaiting for his conclusion.

But Will didn't voice it out loud. Though it was there, floating between them like a mist.

That was the reason Will felt comforted when he was with Hannibal.

The sole time he felt soothed ever.

Empathy.

Its worst enemy.

Turned into a friend, by a foe.

Oh, the *irony*.

He couldn't step back more; there was a wall. So he slid up against it to reach the door but– but of course, Hannibal didn't let him.

As soon the slender fingers closed around his arm, Will felt his heart stop.

“Let go of me” he whispered, but strength was gone from his voice.

His whole body felt weak, paralysed in fear. In hope.

He didn't want to feel hope now.

“I don't want to let go of you” Hannibal said softly, looking at him in the eyes.

He gently pressed a kiss on his temple.

I want to live with you, Will heard in Lecter's voice, seeing himself through his former therapist's eyes. He looked scared, cornered, vulnerable, yet desirable in a way. It was strange, seeing yourself like this.

But it felt good. Hannibal wasn't afraid, trapped, nor defenceless right now, and his collected feelings gave Will back some strength.

Hannibal kissed him again, losing his mouth in the dark, damp curl of his forehead. Like a father kisses a child, Will realised. Or a brother his lost sibling.

I truly care for you.

“We can't” he uttered, and Hannibal lips were in his hair.

Feeling the smaller body slowly losing control, giving in, yet fighting to remain whole. *Of course we can*.

Mouth still kissing him, nibbling on an ear.

Will's eyes closed on their own accord, losing themselves in the embrace, but Will forced them back open.

Cradling the smaller body against his. Like he had cradled Mischa.

Tenderly.

A rasped moan escaped Will's lips.

He tried to push away, but his eyes were closing again.

Hannibal's body on his. Or was it *his* body on...

“Will Graham” he muttered. “My name is Will Graham.”

A hand on his flank, but a hand also in his hair –Hannibal's hair.

Empathy.

“Stop that” he uttered, and a mouth pressed on a mouth.

He pushed away, weakly, when the kiss deepened; he felt feeble fingers pressing against his chest, to break them apart, and he hungrily retained the evading lips with his.

Empathy.

“I won't” he heard –in his own voice.

“I'm never leaving you” he said.

Hungry lips. Famished fingers sliding on skin.

Yet Hannibal was gentle.

Oh, so gentle. Light. Tender. His fingers like the feathers of wings stroking the bared flesh.

When had they gotten naked?

They were in Will's room. Hannibal's lips were as sensuous as ever. Tasting. Exploring. Warm, and wet. His breath was hot, hotter than a fire. It burnt. But it felt good. A cathartic flame.

Will's drunk fingers traced the line of Hannibal's jaw. His neck. The clavicle. Lost themselves in the hair of his chest, wandering. Then he kissed him.

He didn't know if he wanted to, he still hated the man.

But he wanted to, *he wanted to so much.* Memories of his good therapist, friend, colleague, Hannibal. Memories of the past.

“Did I kill Abigail?” he asked.

“No.”

The answer was blunt, and immediate. Then Hannibal lightly sucked on Will's earlobe.

“Why” Will whispered, pushing him away. “What did she die –You liked her.”

“I did. I still do.”

His mouth on Graham's neck. So soft.

He interrupted himself to look at Will.

“She knew about your encephalitis. She was going to tell. This wasn't supposed to happen.”

“You killed her because of me?” Graham said, sharply taking a hold on Hannibal's hair, gripping him tight and lifting his face up.

“It was a mistake” Hannibal said. “I would not do that today. I regret it sincerely.”

Will let him got, and let himself slip back into the cushions.

“I'm not a killer” he sighed, relieved.

“You killed Garett Jacob Hobbs” Lecter reminded him.

“It's not the same thing.”

Will pushed Lecter away, shifting to his side. Hannibal didn't take the hint, and pressed himself against Will's back, folding an arm around him, settling his head in the crook of Graham's neck.

“Now you will have the opportunity to kill on your own volition” he whispered.

“I don't want to kill” Will repeated. “Why don't you get it? I understand you, I can think *like* you, but I am ***not*** *you*.”

Hannibal stroked his side, pondering.

“I want this to work” he said.

Graham didn't answer.

“I know we are different” Hannibal added. “But this is going to work.”

“Why do you want that so badly?”

But he knew why.

He shifted sides again, to come face to face with Hannibal.

“I am not killing anybody” he said.

“Why do you think people... *deserve* to live?”

“They don't *deserve* to die either.”

Hannibal swallowed.

“There is a part of you that misses me” he said. “A part of you who wants me back. Listen to it.”

“I'm listening to the scars you left.”

“Those lie in the past.”

“Past is memory, and memory never sleeps.”

Hannibal smiled. “Always the poet.”

Their voices were low, their faces barely a hand apart, settled comfortably on the pillows. Their could feel each other's breath.

Hannibal's slender fingers played with Will's curls.

“I can soothe your pain” he said.

“Begging for attention. Again” Will answered, quite dryly.

Hannibal sighed.

“What do you have left to lose?” he asked, and Will's mouth twitched. “You are alone. Your family left you. Alana took your dogs and eventually gave them away, with your permission I assume; you barely manage teaching. Jack keeps you working at the FBI out of remorse and pity, and you know it. You fish, and you drink. That's all there is to it. What is there left to lose?”

“My sanity.”

“You're an alcoholic.”

“That doesn't mean I'm insane.”

“It means your mind is hurting you. I can help.”

“I don't want your '*help*'. I've tasted your '*help*', and it was biter.”

Gently, slowly, to vanquish his reluctance, Hannibal took Will against his chest, and started stroking his hair, his mouth kissing the brown curls.

And he said nothing.

And he *did* nothing, just laid there, with Graham's head on his chest, caressing softly his hair. His breath even under Will's cheek.

“I hate you” Graham whispered.

Hannibal kept stroking his head, his breath not even faltering once. His heartbeats perfectly even.

“I... I *do*, I do *hate* you” Will Graham uttered, a sob trembling in his voice.

But his hand was on the side of Hannibal's chest now, nervously tapping it with his middle finger, as if afraid to stroke.

They were so quiet. So... serene.

His mind wasn't even scared. His mind was blank.

Tap, tap, tap, the tip of his finger on unfazed skin.

He felt chaos threaten the inside of his heart, like a storm rising. He knew he had to remain strong, to push away this urge to let himself be dragged into the blandness of that moment.

Light fingers in his hair. A missing hand.

How comes Lecter had sacrificed a hand?

Gentle. Tender. He couldn't have changed. He still killed people.

He couldn't let Lecter *win*.

But he couldn't let him go. Not now. Not... just now.

He could let him stay. A little. Just...

Just a night. A tranquil night. One during which Will would actually sleep.

He closed his eyes, and Lecter smiled.

Will's fingers had stopped tapping.

Chapter End Notes

About two chapters to go! I'll let you take bets on who'll eventually succeed -did Hannibal subdue Will, will Graham walk away... or will they somehow live together happily ever after and have numerous diners?

Rôti amer

Chapter Summary

> Will made his choice, and turned in Lecter to the police. There're only a few moments left before they take him in, still Hannibal wishes to say goodbye.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Hannibal felt cold metal on his left wrist, it was already too late.

Will hadn't cuffed his right hand, assuming correctly Lecter could easily get his prothesis off. Hannibal was thus fastened to the bed only by his left arm.

Will had then swiftly tied his feet together, not taking any chances with the dangerous killer.

He had been effectively bonded; so Hannibal didn't move. He just opened his eyes and looked at Will who, noticing he had woken up, turned his gaze away.

“Are you sure you want this?” Hannibal asked calmly.

Graham moved away, not looking at him, and went to take his mobile phone from the pocket of a jacket which had been thrown on a chair.

“Give me Agent Jack Crawford” he said. “No, not her, Crawford. It's urgent.”

“What are you going to tell him, Will?” Hannibal asked. “Hello, Jack. I just spent the night with the Chesapeake Ripper; would you be so kind as to jail him now?”

“We didn't sleep together”.

“Oh but we did. Was it not even more intimate when intercourse was not actually involved?”

Will sent him a sharp look, then turned away and went out of the room.

Lecter instantly started to figure out ways of getting out of his restrains. He had hidden plastic needles under his skin when he had first escaped of prison, and would have to find a good opportunity to use them. He would have been able to bit his arm and get the first needle out of his wrist, but Graham hadn't gone far away from the door, and checked on him regularly. Clever boy.

Hannibal smirked.

Not so clever as to put away his prosthetic hand.

Hannibal kept very still when the police officers entered, cautiously, some of them pointing their guns on him.

“Good morning, Jack” Lecter greeted, eyes focused and cold as a snake's.

Crawford looked at him, disgust all over his face. Then he watched someone through the doorstep –most probably Will.

“Why is he naked, again?” he asked.

Graham muttered some explanation, that he had probably given already. Hannibal smirked. This was already going well.

The first police officer reached him, nervously checked on his bonds, and asked for his partner to cover her while she put her gun away to pull a sheet on Lecter's body.

“The ties are good” she said (they weren't) “You can bring the stretcher”.

Hannibal, who had switched the handcuffs of hand, watched attentively as two new unharmed officers entered the room with said stretcher, where lied a well-known mask. Lecter's eyes darted to the door, looking for a glimpse of Will.

But Graham was pointedly avoiding him.

Hannibal looked at the nearest officers, neither young nor inexperienced –good choice, Jack– but clearly doubting his level of dangerousness.

One of them seemed almost willing to be given proof of it.

“Could I at least put something on?” he asked tranquilly, looking straight at that officer, deliberately adding a slight touch of smugness to his voice.

“Not happening” the policeman answered, grabbing roughly the bonds of his feet, looking obviously satisfied to be in a position of power.

Or to think that he was.

Lecter's bonds were already loosened.

The agent noticed it just a second too late, and Hannibal smirked when he saw the surprised look on his face.

He didn't give him time to react, of course.

He rolled out off the bed, which he kicked off with the heel of his feet to throw it on the officer holding a gun on the other side. That gave him time to jump at the nearest two agents and break their neck.

Neatly, though their didn't deserve it; they hadn't done their job properly out of stress; but what interested him was the doubtful officer he had just surprised; he grabbed him with a hand, disarmed and stunned him with two efficient blows, then took him as a hostage against the remaining two gun-holding agents.

Stabbing his eye with a pen Will had forgotten to take out of the bed-table drawer, and that he had previously secured, was just an added bonus.

“DOCTOR LECTER” Jack Crawford yelled, pointing his gun at him. “LET THIS MAN GO OR WE'LL SHOOT.”

Hannibal smirked, noticing Will had finally deigned to appear in the door frame, looking worried. For a moment, his gaze crossed Hannibal's and... maintained contact with surprising easiness.

“DOCTOR LECTER!” Crawford shouted again.

Hannibal's eyes jumped to him.

“You are going to let go of Agent Kylee, or we'll shoot. I am making myself clear?”

“Agent Kylee?” Hannibal smirked. “Are you trying to create an emotional link between me and that hostage, Jack?”

He made a point in staying both shielded by “Agent Kylee” and visible enough to drive Crawford on. Would he shoot? Hannibal was curious about it.

By the door he could see Will, uneasy, clearly scared, unarmed.

“You were naughty, Mister Graham” he gently whispered, making a point in looking at him with an intensity Jack wouldn't miss.

And of course, Agent Crawford took the bait.

“Will” he said. “Talk to him.”

Will's startled eyes jumped to Hannibal, then to Crawford, and he nodded, already saying "no", when Jack looked at him with his usual bluntness.

"You had no problem *sleeping* with the man yesterday, and he's clearly interested in you. Make him let go of Kylee."

Will's head twitched.

"Don't drag me back into this, don't–"

"That was AN ORDER, Agent Graham" Crawford shouted, raising his voice. "Do it. NOW."

Graham stepped in almost involuntarily. He glanced uneasily at Hannibal, then again, almost pleadingly, at Jack.

"You get this man to safety" Crawford ordered him. "He wouldn't be in danger if you'd properly secured Lecter in the first place."

Graham cringed, and Hannibal concealed his satisfaction. Jack was still angry with himself for having trusted in a serial killer and having been made a public fool; and as always he tended to pass his nerves on someone he found just a tad less guilty than himself.

Played like a fiddle.

Will turned to Hannibal.

Looked at him, then back to Jack. "I can't–"

"*Will*" Jack insisted.

"He won't listen to me!"

"To whom then?" Crawford cringed. "Do it Will. I got you covered."

Covered like last time? Hannibal heard Will ponder.

He turned back to him. Didn't dare to look in his eyes.

"The man's loosing blood, Will" Hannibal reminded. "Do you want another life on your hands?"

"*You're the one who killed them!*" Graham finally broke. "Don't– don't try to turn it around!"

"I was not talking about *Agent Kylee*" Lecter said. "But about me. Jack seems quite trigger happy, I think he would not mind to pull it accidentally in my direction."

"Yes well, you just killed two of his police officers."

Hannibal smiled.

"Yet the one I want is you. Why did you call the police, Will?"

Graham rolled his eyes, starting to pace in his agitation –starting to forget a little about how dangerous Lecter was.

As he was passing by, Jack and the remaining gun holding agents had to lower their guns to avoid any accidents.

So Hannibal waited. Hannibal talked. And when Graham was just exasperated and wary enough to make a small mistake, he threw Agent One-Eye at Jack and took Will back instead.

Graham fought, and some guns where fired –until Jack demanded to everyone to stop shooting, there was still an hostage for god's sake!

But Hannibal was now back to the corner of the room, seizing Will with great strength, like a spider hiding back in his hole after grabbing his prey.

Will was almost too petrified to fight.

Or was he? Hannibal only had a hand on his throat, the other arm wrapped around his waist, and Will had only taken a hold on them, without much strength.

Did he welcome death?

“You can trust me, Will” Hannibal whispered gently in his ear.

He saw Graham grin in irony, but he changed that to surprise by kissing him lightly on that spot he had once bitten off.

“Think about what we discussed” he added, ignoring Jack, who had been shouting orders and threats at him since he had taken Will.

He felt the boy's heart beat madly in his own chest. Will's fingers let slowly go of his hand and wandered higher up, hesitantly stroking Lecter's dishevelled hair.

“You're lying” Will whispered.

A bullet smacked and hit the wall near Hannibal's head.

“This was a warning shot, Lecter” Jack Crawford said, interrupting their moment. “If you don't let go of Will now, you will *not* get out of that house alive.”

Graham's hand had gone back to the hand on his throat. Hannibal wasn't even really squeezing.

“I will let go of Mister Graham” Hannibal announced. “But at one condition.”

Jack bared his teeth. “Don't pull your luck, *Lecter*” he spat.

Hannibal smiled, and waited, looking at him, patient. Waiting until Jack had to surrender and ask what the condition was.

“I want to get dressed first” Hannibal answered casually. “You barged into my room unexpected, gun in hand, giving me no time to get decent. Very rude.”

Under his fingers, he felt Will's throats silently chuckle. “Don't tell me you killed all those persons just because they didn't let you get dressed” he whispered.

“I did not” he answered.

Will scent appealed to him, clean yet still impregnated of their night together.

“Alright” Crawford said. “You've got one minute. Let Will go.”

“Not just yet” Hannibal answered sharply. Bring me the clothes first.”

He was testing Jack's patience; such an amusing game.

When Crawford turned his head to give his orders, he kissed Will under the ear.

“Why did you, then?” Graham asked in a low voice, not really scared anymore. “Kill them? Was it just out of curiosity?”

Hannibal smiled. “I did it for you” he whispered.

“M–?” The clothes had arrived, and Hannibal instructed they'd be thrown at Will.

“Dress me” he asked, releasing his grip on Graham's throat, but maintaining him close by the waist.

Will didn't even question him. He looked tired, waiting for it all to end. He helped Hannibal put his shirt on, his pants, not caring that Lecter was using him as a human shield to protect himself from an eventual gunshot.

“Will you miss me?” Hannibal asked.

Graham didn't answer; he put his jacked on.

“If you don't pay me the occasional visit, I will be very disappointed” Hannibal said.

“I won't let you manipulate me again” Will answered. “I learnt my lesson.”

“But did you?” Hannibal gently whispered, stroking softly the brown curls.

He lowered his head, and took a breath full of Will's scent. Poignant, anxious, spiced up with a strength he hadn't noticed before, that puzzled him.

“Minute's up!” Crawford shouted from his place. “Lecter, let Will Graham go.”

Hannibal didn't move, yet let his right arm slid away from Will.

“You're dressed” Will said in a low voice, not daring to look at him in the eyes.

“This is our farewell then” Hannibal simply answered.

Will's swallowed. He took a step back, and Lecter let him.

“Good-bye, Will.”

Graham stilled.

Then he rose up his eyes and nailed them into Hannibal's.

“Good-bye, Doctor Lecter.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay, now for good, this is the last chapter before the last chapter. Everything is written and all, I just have to post it.

Equilibrium

Chapter Summary

Sneaky Hannibal escaped from jail, which worries Crawford, not Will. He knows Hannibal is going to pay him a visit eventually though, probably to discuss about how he handed him over to the police...

It's just that Will is done worrying.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“No, I'm not worried Jack, no” Will sighed in the phone receiver. “I don't think Lecter would find my new house just a few days after escaping from prison *again* –not if you've done your job right.”

He was laying in his shorts on the sofa, gently petting the head of his newest stray, whose head rested contentedly on his bare chest.

“Yes, I did visit him in prison some time before his escape. What are you trying to imply?”

The long corridor. A cold white room.

“*Good morning, Hannibal”.*

“Will you ever stop with that? He and I were lovers, yes, but that was before I knew who –or what– he was.”

Lecter counted two seconds before getting up from his bed, slowly but efficiently, swift and smooth as a cat.

Then he stood, still and straight at the start centre of his tiny grey cell. Neatly combed, in a dreadful white outfit, feeling more than ever the empty space of his right hand.

His eyes piercing Will like daggers.

“*Good morning, professor Graham” he greeted politely.*

“That was an act, Jack. I had to get him to trust me, so I would get out of it alive. What would *you* have done? Yes well, I don't have your background –stop that! No, not you, my stray.”

It was nibbling at his jaw playfully.

“I wanted to be safe. I should be safe now, right? You are not letting me down again, are you Jack? Yes well, I have reasons for bitterness.”

“*Jack put me on the witness protection program” Will said. “It will be difficult for you to find me again, when you get out.”*

“When*, I get out?” Lecter repeated, browns rising up slightly.*

“*He really did his best on this one, nobody would expect you to find me” Will continued.*

Hannibal's eyes narrowed.

“*I am afraid my hand... my hands are quite full right now, Will. Though I would* love *to pay you a visit as soon as I am free to do so.”*

His nostrils flared; he was angry.

It had been five months since their last... meeting.

“*Please, do” Will answered, deeply unimpressed by Lecter's ire. He was looking at him straight in the eyes.*

He seemed sober, but his hands were slightly shaking.

“It's thursday morning, 6 o'clock, what do you think? I'm working on my third bottle of whisky, and I'm working hard. I'm not sure I ever worked that hard on a case. Okay, okay. You're right, I'm sorry, I shouldn't be that hash with you. It's not like you involuntarily ruined my life. What? Yes. The house is fine.”

“*I'll soon be moving to my new house” Will said, his head twitching. “Very homely; it has quite a view... and a pond. I might get a pet or two. You now I have a habit of collecting strays.”*

“*Are you here for idle talk?” Lecter interrupted. “Should we... exchange recipes?”*

“*Some dogs bite at first” Will answered, unaffected. “But I always found a way to socialise them.”*

Hannibal's contemptuous pout dropped at that, switching to a sharp look of interest.

“*Not all dogs can be tamed” he pointed out.*

“*Given the right incentive, they will tame themselves” Will replied.*

“*Incentive” Lecter repeated in disdain. “According to you, to what kind of 'incentive' do wild dogs respond?”*

“*Diner” Will answered calmly. “And a caring hand. I see you're currently missing one.”*

Hannibal's sensuous lips distorted in a smirk. His eyes dropped to the floor then right back up again, almost flirtatious.

"*What about a grown wolf?" he said, his eyes straight in Will's. "Could you tame such a beast?"*

Will approached the glass wall without fear, rolling tightly the newspapers he was holding.

"*Do you know what I see when I look into your mind, Dr Lecter?" he asked in a whisper.*

Hannibal took a step forward, looking at Will like a snake about to strike.

"*Your former wife?" he softly hissed. "Your step child's kidney spread out on a diner table?"*

Will didn't even flinch.

"*Everything", he answered; and Hannibal shivered.*

"Yes, I have heard the news, Jack. A new ripping, what a surprise. Now Lecter's escaped, we should expect some of those. No, I'm not bitter. I just don't care anymore. He's out, he's out. It's not my problem. No, it's *not*. Don't try to bring me back again. I can't. I know you don't give a shit, but I can't. I don't even watch TV anymore, just papers. *Papers*, and it still hurts."

Graham lifted the rolled up newspapers he'd brought with him and slid it through one of the round air holes of the glass wall, in one swift motion, pushed in with one finger. It bounced on Hannibal's reduced arm and once more on the floor, stilling on his shoe.

Lecter slightly lifted his chin, lips pressed in vexation.

"*Rabid dogs ought to be put to sleep" Will whispered. "And nothing bests at besting a dog than, well, a bigger dog."*

Lecter rose towards him a dark, impenetrable gaze.

"*You shan't be late for diner."*

"Is that really why you're calling? To check on me? You know, I might be a drunk –aoh! that stray definitely needs an education– but I can still take care of myself. Oh? Oh, I should have known."

Left alone in his ghastly cell, Hannibal picked up Graham's newspapers and went back to lay on his bed.

He flipped through the paper, barely reading the headlines for now, until a glimpse of silver drew his attention, next to the picture of "Ailan Smid, named best school director of Ohklama".

"Yes, I know about the murder, you just told me." Will said. "And to tell the truth, I'm actually relieved there is one less untouchable pedophile directing a school. What do you mean, 'fishy'?"

Hannibal smiled.

“So he found a pen. Isn't how he escaped the first time? By removing the insides of a pen and turning it into a cuff key or such? Starling told me. Yes, she knows too. Why aren't you on *her* back? Don't you think it's a little more probable that H– Lecter goes to her rather than to me? How could he ruin *me* more?”

Hannibal conscientiously removed the item and secured it in his shoe, for now. Then he went back to the paper, paying attention to details.

Like this short filler in the agony column, “To A.A.Anna. Found: stray dog, please report to Mr. Fisherman at...”.

“Do you really think he'll come after me? I've made it clear that I want nothing to do with him anymore, and that –aouch, damn dog!–”

Lecter then went to the end of the paper, curious as always of its very short recipes section.

“–and that the one thing left for him here would be a yellow liver. Hannibal wouldn't eat a sick liver.”

One of them had been neatly cut off.

“I hear you Jack. I just don't think I should worry. I don't care. Let him find me. Let him eat me alive for hell's sake; *I. Don't. Care*.”

He was playing with the other's teeth now, putting fingers in the wet mouth, getting from it gentle bites and licks.

“Shhh, be quiet” he smiled, which awarded him to be lightly attacked and nibbled on. “Oh, it's nothing” he said to the phone. “My new pet; he likes to play”.

Hannibal smirked, and bit on the side of Will's chest.

“Well, clearly Lecter's killing again” he told Jack through the phone, lazily sliding a hand through Hannibal's hair. “But Lecter was always quite hard to pinpoint, so I'm not surprised this new victim doesn't fit the usual... or unusual profile. I'm not surprised, and I'm *not scared*, alright? No, I don't want any advanced protection, stop insisting.”

“Will, get him off the phone” Hannibal whispered, gently kissing him on the chest, on the collarbone, on the chin. “Doesn't he know what time it is? Calling people at such an hour. He is being painfully *rude*.”

Will frowned and put a hand on Lecter's mouth.

“What did we agree on?” he reminded him.

Hannibal's upper lip raised in disdain while Will's hand slid away from his mouth.

“I shall not kill the rude” he said. “Which implies you shall establish quickly a new killer's profile. My supplies are running low.”

“Liar” Will said, then resumed his call. “No Jack, I don't think it's a copycat. Nor that Lecter's turning into a Vigilante –god forbid. Why are you asking me about that? I'm not working for you anymore. No, and I'm not going to be your counsellor either; just remember that last time I worked for you, you appointed The Chesappeake Ripper as my therapist.”

Annoyed, Hannibal finally took the phone from Will's hands and hung up.

“*That*'s rude” Will pointed out. “And Jack knows something is amiss. If I recall well, he even used the word 'fishy'”.

“Well, we *are* fishermen, now” Hannibal answered, gently leaning in to kiss Will on the lips.

He was getting awfully good at it.

“And who will join us next for diner?” he asked, eyes still half closed.

“I'm working on it” Will answered. “But I need to make sure I'm not wrong about him.”

“I could help you” Lecter offered. “I would be good at profiling.”

“You would try to mislead me into having you kill innocent people” Will answered. “I'm not *that much* of a fool.”

“You don't trust me?”

“Only to be yourself” Will said, stroking softly Hannibal's cheek.

“I'm appalled by your lucidity” Hannibal smiled, nibbling mildly on his lips.

How long would it last?

He didn't like being contained, but Will had been right.

As soon as he had gotten out of jail, he had gone to him.

He had intended not to, he had even turned the other way at first, thinking about leaving a clear trail of bodies, an arrow pointing directly at Will.

But Graham was now in his head, and he had been right.

Given the right incentive...

“I will kill your family” he whispered, looking at Will straight in the eyes. “I will tear out their hearts and make meals out of them.”

“You know what happens if you do” Will answered calmly, caressing his back without as much as a hint of worry.

That made Lecter mad.

He wanted to torture them, now, just to spite him; but he knew he wouldn't.

Graham had him.

So deeply now, under his skin.

He wasn't even looking forwards his next diner, he was feeling too fine right now.

He had always felt contented, satisfied with his glamourous life; but now he was glad, happy, exhilarated; now he was content but also his heart beat wildly in his chest like a drum... An opera.

And whenever Will looked at him, stroked his hair, or merely smiled...

Hannibal was *home*.

Chapter End Notes

In the immortal words of Adèle' Skyfall song, "This is the end". For good this time.
Unless I suddenly decide to write a Murder Husbands sequel.

I hope you enjoyed the reading! :)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!